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CARLYLE'S COMPLETE WORKS

THE STERLING EDITION

CRITICAL AND MISCELLANEOUS

ESSAYS

COLLECTED AND REPUBLISHED

(First Time, 1839; Final, 1869)

BY

THOMAS CARLYLE

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Painted by SAMUEL LAWRENCE. Etched by E. A. FOWLE.

Frontispiece.

CRITICAL AND MISCELLANEOUS ESSAYS

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(FIRST TIME, 1839; FINAL, 1869.)

VOL. XIII.

CRITICAL AND MISCELLANEOUS ESSAYS.

JEAN PAUL FRIEDRICH RICHTER.[1]

[1827.]

Dr. Johnson, it is said, when he first heard of Boswell's intention to write a life of him, announced, with decision enough, that, if he thought Boswell really meant to *write his* life, he would prevent it by *taking Boswell's!* That great authors should actually employ this preventive against bad biographers is a thing we would by no means recommend: but the truth is, that, rich as we are in Biography, a well-written Life is almost as rare as a well-spent one; and there are certainly many more men whose history deserves to be recorded, than persons willing and able to record it. But great men, like the old Egyptian kings, must all be tried after death, before they can be embalmed: and what, in truth, are these "Sketches," "Anas," "Conversations," "Voices," and the like, but the votes and pleadings of so many ill-informed advocates, jurors and judges; from whose conflict, however, we shall in the end have a true verdict? The worst of it is at the first; for weak eyes are precisely the fondest of glittering objects. Accordingly, no sooner does a great man depart, and leave his character as public property, than a crowd of little men rushes towards it. There they are gathered together, blinking up to it with such vision as they have, scanning it from afar, hovering round it this way and that, each cunningly endeavoring, by all arts, to catch some reflex of it in the little mirror of Himself; though, many times, this mirror is so twisted with convexities and concavities, and, indeed, so extremely small in size, that to expect any true image, or any image whatever from it, is out of the question.

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[1] Edinburgh Review, No. 91.—*Jean Paul Friedrich Richter's Leben, nebst Characteristik seiner Werke; von Heinrich Döring.* (Jean Paul Friedrich Richter's Life, with a Sketch of his Works; by Heinrich Döring.) Gotha; Hennings, 1826. 12mo, pp. 208.

Richter was much better-natured than Johnson; and took many provoking things with the spirit of a humorist and philosopher; nor can we think that so good a man, had he even foreseen this Work of Döring's, would have gone the length of assassinating him for it. Döring is a person we have known for several years, as a compiler, and translator, and ballad-monger; whose grand enterprise, however, is his *Gallery of Weimar Authors;* a series of strange little Biographies, beginning with Schiller, and already extending over Wieland and Herder; — now comprehending, probably by conquest, Klopstock also; and lastly, by a sort of *droit d'aubaine,* Jean Paul Friedrich Richter; neither of whom belonged to Weimar. Authors, it must be admitted, are happier than the old painter with his cocks: for they write, naturally and without fear of ridicule, the name of their work on the title-page; and thenceforth the purport and tendency of each volume remains indisputable. Döring is sometimes lucky in this privilege; otherwise his manner of composition, being so peculiar, might occasion difficulty now and then. Biographies, according to Döring's method, are a simple business. You first ascertain, from the Leipsic *Conversationslexicon,* or Jördens's *Poetical Lexicon,* or Flögel, or Koch, or other such *Compendium* or *Handbook,* the date and place of the proposed individual's birth, his parentage, trade, appointments, and the titles of his works; the date of his death you already know from the newspapers: this serves as a foundation for the edifice. You then go through his writings, and all other writings where he or his pursuits are treated of, and wherever you find a passage with his name in it, you cut it out, and carry it away. In this manner a mass of materials is collected, and the building now proceeds apace. Stone is laid on the top of stone, just as it comes to hand; a trowel or two of biographic mortar, if perfectly convenient, being spread in here and there, by way of cement; and so the strangest pile suddenly arises; amorphous, pointing every way but to the zenith, here a block of granite, there a mass of pipe-clay; till the whole finishes, when the materials are finished; — and you leave it standing to posterity, like some miniature Stonehenge, a perfect architectural enigma.

To speak without figure, this mode of life-writing has its disadvantages. For one thing, the composition cannot well be what the critics call harmonious: and, indeed, Herr Döring's transitions are often abrupt enough. The hero changes his object and occupation from page to page, often from sentence to sentence, in the most unaccountable way; a pleasure-journey, and a sickness of fifteen years, are despatched with equal brevity; in a moment you find him married, and the father of three fine children. He dies no less suddenly; — he is studying as usual, writing poetry, receiving visits, full of life and business, when instantly some paragraph opens under him, like one of the trap-doors in the *Vision of Mirza*, and he drops, without note of preparation, into the shades below. Perhaps, indeed, not forever; we have instances of his rising after the funeral, and winding up his affairs. The time has been that, when the brains were out, the man would die; but Döring orders these things differently.

After all, however, we have no pique against poor Döring: on the contrary, we regularly purchase his ware; and it gives us true pleasure to see his spirits so much improved since we first met him. In the *Life of Schiller* his state did seem rather unprosperous: he wore a timorous, submissive and downcast aspect, as if, like Sterne's Ass, he were saying, "Don't thrash me; — but if you will, you may!" Now, however, comforted by considerable sale, and praise from this and the other *Litteraturblatt*, which has commended his diligence, his fidelity, and, strange to say, his method, he advances with erect countenance and firm hoof, and even recalcitrates contemptuously against such as do him offence. *Glück auf dem Weg!* is the worst we wish him.

Of his *Life of Richter* these preliminary observations may be our excuse for saying but little. He brags much, in his Preface, that it is all true and genuine; for Richter's widow, it seems, had, by public advertisement, cautioned the world against it; another biography, partly by the illustrious deceased himself, partly by Otto, his oldest friend and the appointed Editor of his Works, being actually in preparation. This rouses the indignant spirit of Döring, and he stoutly asseverates that, his documents being altogether authentic, this biography is *no* pseudo-biography. With still greater truth he might have asseverated that it was no biography at all. Well are he and Hennings of Gotha aware that this thing of shreds and patches has been vamped together for sale only. Except a few letters to Kunz, the Bamberg Bookseller, which turn mainly on the purchase of spectacles, and the journeyings and freightage of two boxes that used to pass and repass between Richter and Kunz's circulating library; with three or four notes of similar importance, and chiefly to other booksellers, there are no biographical documents here, which were not open to all Europe as well as to Heinrich Döring. Indeed, very nearly one half of the *Life* is occupied with a description of the funeral and its appendages, — how the "sixty torches, with a number of lanterns and pitchpans," were arranged; how this Patrician or Professor followed that, through Friedrich Street, Chancery Street, and other streets of Bayreuth; and how at last the torches all went out, as Dr. Gabler and Dr. Spatzier were perorating (decidedly in bombast) over the grave. Then, it seems, there were meetings held in various parts of Germany, to solemnize the memory of Richter; among the rest, one in the Museum of Frankfort-on-Mayn; where a Doctor Börne speaks another long speech, if possible in still more decided bombast. Next come threnodies from all the four winds, mostly on very splay-footed metre. The whole of which is here snatched from the kind oblivion of the newspapers, and "lives in Settle's numbers one day more."

We have too much reverence for the name of Richter to think of laughing over these unhappy threnodists and panegyrists; some of whom far exceed anything we English can exhibit in the epicedial style. They rather testify, however maladroitly, that the Germans have felt their loss, — which, indeed, is one to Europe at large; they even affect us with a certain melancholy feeling, when we consider how a heavenly voice must become mute, and nothing be heard in its stead but the whoop of quite earthly voices, lamenting, or pretending to lament. Far from us be all remembrance of Döring and Company, while we speak of Richter! But his own Works give us some glimpses into his singular and noble nature; and to our readers a few words on this man, certainly one of the most remarkable of his age, will not seem thrown away.

Except by name, Jean Paul Friedrich Richter is little known out of Germany. The only thing connected with him, we think, that has reached this country, is his saying, imported by Madame de Staël, and thankfully pocketed by most newspaper critics: — "Providence has given to the French the empire of the land, to the English that of the sea, to the Germans that of — the air!" Of this last element, indeed, his own genius might easily seem to have been a denizen; so fantastic, many-colored, far-grasping, every way perplexed and extraordinary is his mode of writing. To translate him properly is next to impossible; nay, a dictionary of his works has actually been in part published for the use of German readers! These things have restricted his sphere of action, and may long restrict it, to his own country: but there, in return, he is a favorite of the first class; studied through all his intricacies with trustful admiration, and a love which tolerates much. During the last forty years, he has been continually before the public, in various capacities, and growing generally in esteem with all ranks of critics; till, at length, his gainsayers have either been silenced or convinced; and Jean Paul, at first reckoned half-mad, has long ago vindicated his singularities to nearly universal satisfaction, and now combines popularity with real depth of endowment, in perhaps a greater degree than any other writer; being second in the latter point to scarcely more than one of his contemporaries, and in the former second to none.

The biography of so distinguished a person could scarcely fail to be interesting, especially his autobiography; which, accordingly, we wait for, and may in time submit to our readers, if it seem worthy: meanwhile, the history of his life, so far as outward events characterize it, may be stated in a few words. He was born at Wunsiedel in Bayreuth, in March, 1763. His father was a subaltern teacher in the Gymnasium of the place, and was afterwards promoted to be clergyman at Schwarzbach on the Saale. Richter's early education was of the scantiest sort; but his fine faculties and unwearied diligence supplied every defect. Unable to purchase books, he borrowed what he could come at, and transcribed from them, often great part of their contents, — a habit of excerpting which continued with him through life, and influenced, in more than one way, his mode of writing and study. To the last, he was an insatiable and universal reader: so that his extracts accumulated on his hands, "till they filled whole chests." In 1780, he went to the University of Leipsic; with the highest character, in spite of the impediments which he had struggled with, for talent and acquirement. Like his father, he was destined for Theology; from which, however, his vagrant genius soon diverged into Poetry and Philosophy, to the neglect, and, ere long, to the final abandonment of his appointed profession. Not well knowing what to do, he now accepted a tutorship in some family of rank; then he had pupils in his own house, — which, however, like his way of life, he often changed; for by this time he had become an author, and, in his wanderings over Germany, was putting forth, now here, now there, the strangest books, with the strangest titles. For instance, — *Greenland Lawsuits;* — *Biographical Recreations under the Cranium of a Giantess;* — *Selection from the Papers of the Devil;* — and the like! In these indescribable performances, the splendid faculties of the writer, luxuriating as they seem in utter riot, could not be disputed; nor, with all its extravagance, the fundamental strength, honesty and tenderness of his nature. Genius will reconcile men to much. By degrees, Jean Paul began to be considered not a strange crack-brained mixture of enthusiast and buffoon, but a man of infinite humor, sensibility, force and penetration. His writings procured him friends and fame; and at length a wife and a settled provision. With Caroline Mayer, his good spouse, and a pension (in 1802) from the King of Bavaria, he settled in Bayreuth, the capital of his native province; where he lived thenceforth, diligent and celebrated in many new departments of Literature; and died on the 14th of November, 1825, loved as well as admired by all his countrymen, and most by those who had known him most intimately.

A huge, irregular man, both in mind and person (for his Portrait is quite a physiognomical study), full of fire, strength and impetuosity, Richter seems, at the same time, to have been, in the highest degree, mild, simple-hearted, humane. He was fond of conversation, and might well shine in it: he talked, as he wrote, in a style of his own, full of wild strength and charms, to which his natural Bayreuth accent often gave additional effect. Yet he loved retirement, the country and all natural things; from his youth upwards, he himself tells us, he may almost be said to have lived in the open air; it was among groves and meadows that he studied, — often that he wrote. Even in the streets of Bayreuth, we have heard, he was seldom seen without a flower in his breast. A man of quiet tastes, and warm compassionate affections! His friends he must have loved as few do. Of his poor and humble mother he often speaks by allusion, and never without reverence and overflowing tenderness. "Unhappy is the man," says he, "for whom his own mother has not made all other mothers venerable!" And elsewhere: "O thou who hast still a father and a mother, thank God for it in the day when thy soul is full of joyful tears, and needs a bosom wherein to shed them!" — We quote the following sentences from Döring, almost the only memorable thing he has written in this Volume: —

"Richter's studying or sitting apartment offered, about this time (1793), a true and beautiful emblem of his simple and noble way of thought, which comprehended at once the high and the low. Whilst his mother, who then lived with him, busily pursued her household work, occupying herself about stove and dresser, Jean Paul was sitting in a corner of the same room, at a simple writing-desk, with few or no books about him, but merely with one or two drawers containing excerpts and manuscripts. The jingle of the household operations seemed not at all to disturb him, any more than did the cooing of the pigeons, which fluttered to and fro in the chamber, — a place, indeed, of considerable size." [1]

Our venerable Hooker, we remember, also enjoyed "the jingle of household operations," and the more questionable jingle of shrewd tongues to boot, while he wrote; but the good thrifty mother, and the cooing pigeons, were wanting. Richter came afterwards to live in finer mansions, and had the great and learned for associates; but the gentle feelings of those days abode with him: through life he was the same substantial, determinate, yet meek and tolerating man. It is seldom that so much rugged energy can be so blandly attempered; that so much vehemence and so much softness will go together.

The expected Edition of Richter's Works is to be in sixty volumes; and they are no less multifarious than extensive; embracing subjects of all sorts, from the highest problems of Transcendental Philosophy, and the most passionate poetical delineations, to *Golden-Rules for the Weather-Prophet,* and instructions in the *Art of Falling Asleep.* His chief productions are Novels: the *Unsichtbare Loge* (Invisible Lodge); *Flegeljahre* (Wild-Oats); *Life of Fixlein;* the *Jubelsenior* (Parson in Jubilee); *Schmelzle's Journey to Flätz; Katzenberger's Journey to the Bath; Life of Fibel;* with many lighter pieces; and two works of a higher order, *Hesperus* and *Titan,* the largest and the best of his Novels. It was the former that first (in 1795) introduced him into decisive and universal estimation with his countrymen: the latter he himself, with the most judicious of his critics, regarded as his masterpiece. But the name Novelist, as we in England must understand it, would ill describe so vast and discursive a genius: for, with all his grotesque, tumultuous pleasantry, Richter is a man of a truly earnest, nay high and solemn character; and seldom writes without a meaning far beyond the sphere of common romancers. *Hesperus* and *Titan* themselves, though in form nothing more than "novels of real life," as the Minerva Press would say, have solid metal enough in them to furnish whole circulating libraries, were it beaten into the usual filigree; and much which, attenuate it as we might, no quarterly subscriber could well carry with him. Amusement is often, in part almost always, a mean with Richter; rarely or never his highest end. His thoughts, his feelings, the creations of his spirit, walk before us embodied under wondrous shapes, in motley and ever-fluctuating groups; but his essential character, however he disguise it, is that of a Philosopher and moral Poet, whose study has been human nature, whose delight and best endeavor are with all that is beautiful, and tender, and mysteriously sublime, in the fate or history of man. This is the purport of his writings, whether their form be that of fiction or of truth; the spirit that pervades and ennobles his delineations of common life, his wild wayward dreams, allegories, and shadowy imaginings, no less than his disquisitions of a nature directly scientific.

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[1] Page 8.

But in this latter province also Richter has accomplished much. His *Vorschule der Aesthetik* (Introduction to Æsthetics [1]) is a work on Poetic Art, based on principles of no ordinary depth and compass, abounding in noble views, and, notwithstanding its frolicsome exuberance, in sound and subtle criticism; esteemed even in Germany, where criticism has long been treated of as a science, and by such persons as Winkelmann, Kant, Herder, and the Schlegels. Of this work we could speak long, did our limits allow. We fear it might astonish many an honest brother of our craft, were he to read it; and altogether perplex and dash his maturest counsels, if he chanced to understand it. — Richter has also written on

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[1] From *αἰσθάνομαι, to feel.* A word invented by Baumgarten (some eighty years ago), to express generally the *Science of the Fine Arts;* and now in universal use among the Germans. Perhaps we also might as well adopt it; at least if any such *science* should ever arise among us.

Education, a work entitled *Levana;* distinguished by keen practical sagacity, as well as generous sentiment, and a certain sober magnificence of speculation; the whole presented in that singular style which characterizes the man. Germany is rich in works on Education; richer at present than any other country: it is there only that some echo of the Lockes and Miltons, speaking of this high matter, may still be heard; and speaking of it in the language of our own time, with insight into the actual wants, advantages, perils and prospects of this age. Among the writers on this subject Richter holds a high place; if we look chiefly at his tendency and aims, perhaps the highest. — The *Clavis Fichtiana* is a ludicrous performance, known to us only by report; but Richter is said to possess the merit, while he laughs at Fichte, of understanding him; a merit among Fichte's critics which seems to be one of the rarest. Report also, we regret to say, is all that we know of the *Campaner Thal*, a Discourse on the Immortality of the Soul; one of Richter's beloved topics, or rather the life of his whole philosophy, glimpses of which look forth on us from almost every one of his writings. He died while engaged, under recent and almost total blindness, in enlarging and remodelling this *Campaner Thal;* the unfinished manuscript was borne upon his coffin to the burial vault: and Klopstock's hymn, "*Auferstehen wirst du*, Thou shalt arise, my soul," can seldom have been sung with more appropriate application than over the grave of Jean Paul.

We defy the most careless or prejudiced reader to peruse these works without an impression of something splendid, wonderful and daring. But they require to be studied as well as read, and this with no ordinary patience, if the reader, especially the foreign reader, wishes to comprehend rightly either their truth or their want of truth. Tried by many an accepted standard, Richter would be speedily enough disposed of; pronounced a mystic, a German dreamer, a rash and presumptous innovator; and so consigned, with equanimity, perhaps with a certain jubilee, to the Limbo appointed for all such wind-bags and deceptions. Originality is a thing we constantly clamor for, and constantly quarrel with; as if, observes our Author himself, any originality but our own could be expected to content us! In fact, all strange things are apt, without fault of theirs, to estrange us at first view; unhappily scarcely anything is perfectly plain, but what is also perfectly common. The current coin of the realm passes into all hands; and be it gold, silver, or copper, is acceptable and of known value: but with new ingots, with foreign bars, and medals of Corinthian brass, the case is widely different.

There are few writers with whom deliberation and careful distrust of first impressions are more necessary than with Richter. He is a phenomenon from the very surface; he presents himself with a professed and determined singularity: his language itself is a stone of stumbling to the critic; to critics of the grammarian species, an unpardonable, often an insuperable, rock of offence. Not that he is ignorant of grammar, or disdains the sciences of spelling and parsing; but he exercises both in a certain latitudinarian spirit; deals with astonishing liberality in parentheses, dashes, and subsidiary clauses; invents hundreds of new words, alters old ones, or by hyphen chains and pairs and packs them together into most jarring combination; in short, produces sentences of the most heterogeneous, lumbering, interminable kind. Figures without limit; indeed the whole is one tissue of metaphors, and similes, and allusions to all the provinces of Earth, Sea and Air; interlaced with epigrammatic breaks, vehement bursts, or sardonic turns, interjections, quips, puns, and even oaths! A perfect Indian jungle it seems; a boundless, unparalleled imbroglio; nothing on all sides but darkness, dissonance, confusion worse confounded! Then the style of the whole corresponds, in perplexity and extravagance, with that of the parts. Every work, be it fiction or serious treatise, is embaled in some fantastic wrappage, some mad narrative accounting for its appearance, and connecting it with the author, who generally becomes a person in the drama himself, before all is over. He has a whole imaginary geography of Europe in his novels; the cities of Flachsenfingen, Haarhaar, Scheerau, and so forth, with their princes, and privy-councillors, and serene highnesses; most of whom, odd enough fellows every way, are Richter's private acquaintances, talk with him of state matters (in the purest Tory dialect), and often incite him to get on with his writing. No story proceeds without the most erratic digressions, and voluminous tagrags rolling after it in many a snaky twine. Ever and anon there occurs some "Extra-leaf," with its satirical petition, program, or other wonderful intercalation, no mortal can foresee on what. It is, indeed, a mighty maze; and often the panting reader toils after him in vain; or, baffled and spent, indignantly stops short, and retires, perhaps forever.

All this, we must admit, is true of Richter; but much more is true also. Let us not turn from him after the first cursory glance, and imagine we have settled his account by the words Rhapsody and Affectation. They are cheap words, and of sovereign potency; we should see, therefore, that they be not rashly applied. Many things in Richter accord ill with such a theory. There are rays of the keenest truth, nay steady pillars of scientific light rising through this chaos: Is it in fact a chaos; or may it be that our eyes are of finite, not of infinite vision, and have only missed the plan? Few "rhapsodists" are men of science, of solid learning, of rigorous study, and accurate, extensive, nay universal knowledge; as he is. With regard to affectation also, there is much to be said. The essence of affectation is that it be *assumed:* the character is, as it were, forcibly crushed into some foreign mould, in the hope of being thereby reshaped and beautified; the unhappy man persuades himself that he has in truth become a new creature, of the wonderfulest symmetry; and so he moves about with a conscious air, though every movement betrays not symmetry but dislocation. This it is to be affected, to walk in a vain show. But the strangeness alone is no proof of the vanity. Many men that move smoothly in the old-established railways of custom will be found to have their affectation; and perhaps here and there some divergent genius be accused of it unjustly. The *show*, though common, may not cease to be *vain;* nor become so for being uncommon. Before we censure a man for seeming what he is not, we should be sure that we know what he *is*. As to Richter in particular, we cannot but observe, that, strange and tumultuous as he is, there is a certain benign composure visible in his writings; a mercy, a gladness, a reverence, united in such harmony as bespeaks not a false, but a genuine state of mind; not a feverish and morbid, but a healthy and robust state.

The secret of the matter is, that Richter requires more study than most readers care to give him. As we approach more closely, many things grow clearer. In the man's own sphere there is consistency; the farther we advance into it, we see confusion more and more unfold itself into order, till at last, viewed from its proper centre, his intellectual universe, no longer a distorted incoherent series of air-landscapes, coalesces into compact expansion; a vast, magnificent and variegated scene; full of wondrous products; rude, it may be, and irregular; but gorgeous, benignant, great; gay with the richest verdure and foliage, glittering in the brightest and kindest sun.

Richter has been called an intellectual Colossus; and in truth it is somewhat in this light that we view him. His faculties are all of gigantic mould; cumbrous, awkward in their movements; large and splendid, rather than harmonious or beautiful; yet joined in living union; and of force and compass altogether extraordinary. He has an intellect vehement, rugged, irresistible; crushing in pieces the hardest problems; piercing into the most hidden combinations of things, and grasping the most distant: an imagination vague, sombre, splendid, or appalling; brooding over the abysses of Being; wandering through Infinitude, and summoning before us, in its dim religious light, shapes of brilliancy, solemnity, or terror: a fancy of exuberance literally unexampled; for it pours its treasures with a lavishness which knows no limit, hanging, like the sun, a jewel on every grass-blade, and sowing the earth at large with orient pearl. But deeper than all these lies Humor, the ruling quality with Richter; as it were the central fire that pervades and vivifies his whole being. He is a humorist from his inmost soul; he thinks as a humorist, he feels, imagines, acts as a humorist: Sport is the element in which his nature lives and works. A tumultuous element for such a nature, and wild work he makes in it! A Titan in his sport as in his earnestness, he oversteps all bound, and riots without law or measure. He heaps Pelion upon Ossa, and hurls the universe together and asunder like a case of playthings. The Moon "bombards" the Earth, being a rebellious satellite; Mars "preaches" to the other planets, very singular doctrine; nay, we have Time and Space themselves playing fantastic tricks: it is an infinite masquerade; all Nature is gone forth mumming in the strangest guises.

Yet the anarchy is not without its purpose: these vizards are not mere hollow masks; there are living faces under them, and this mumming has its significance. Richter is a man of mirth, but he seldom or never condescends to be a merry-andrew. Nay, in spite of its extravagance, we should say that his humor is of all his gifts intrinsically the finest and most genuine. It has such witching turns; there is something in it so capricious, so quaint, so heartfelt. From his Cyclopean workshop, and its fuliginous limbecs, and huge unwieldy machinery, the little shrivelled twisted Figure comes forth at last, so perfect and so living, to be forever laughed at and forever loved! Wayward as he seems, he works not without forethought: like Rubens, by a single stroke he can change a laughing face into a sad one. But in his smile itself a touching pathos may lie hidden, a pity too deep for tears. He is a man of feeling, in the noblest sense of that word; for he loves all living with the heart of a brother; his soul rushes forth, in sympathy with gladness and sorrow, with goodness or grandeur, over all Creation. Every gentle and generous affection, every thrill of mercy, every glow of nobleness, awakens in his bosom a response; nay strikes his spirit into harmony; a wild music as of wind-harps, floating round us in fitful swells, but soft sometimes, and pure and soul-entrancing, as the song of angels! Aversion itself with him is not hatred; he despises much, but justly, with tolerance also, with placidity, and even a sort of love. Love, in fact, is the atmosphere he breathes in, the medium through which he looks. His is the spirit which gives life and beauty to whatever it embraces.

Inanimate Nature itself is no longer an insensible assemblage of colors and perfumes, but a mysterious Presence, with which he communes in unutterable sympathies. We might call him, as he once called Herder, "a Priest of Nature, a mild Bramin," wandering amid spicy groves, and under benignant skies. The infinite Night with her solemn aspects, Day, and the sweet approach of Even and Morn, are full of meaning for him. He loves the green Earth with her streams and forests, her flowery leas and eternal skies; loves her with a sort of passion, in all her vicissitudes of light and shade; his spirit revels in her grandeur and charms; expands like the breeze over wood and lawn, over glade and dingle, stealing and giving odors.

It has sometimes been made a wonder that things so discordant should go together; that men of humor are often likewise men of sensibility. But the wonder should rather be to see them divided; to find true genial humor dwelling in a mind that was coarse or callous. The essence of humor is sensibility; warm, tender fellow-feeling with all forms of existence. Nay, we may say that unless seasoned and purified by humor, sensibility is apt to run wild; will readily corrupt into disease, falsehood, or, in one word, sentimentality. Witness Rousseau, Zimmermann, in some points also St. Pierre: to say nothing of living instances; or of the Kotzebues, and other pale hosts of woe-begone mourners, whose wailings, like the howl of an Irish wake, have from time to time cleft the general ear. "The last perfection of our faculties," says Schiller with a truth far deeper than it seems, "is that their activity, without ceasing to be sure and earnest, become *sport*." True humor is sensibility, in the most catholic and deepest sense; but it is this *sport* of sensibility; wholesome and perfect therefore; as it were, the playful teasing fondness of a mother to her child.

That faculty of irony, of caricature, which often passes by the name of humor, but consists chiefly in a certain superficial distortion or reversal of objects, and ends at best in laughter, bears no resemblance to the humor of Richter. A shallow endowment this; and often more a habit than an endowment.

It is but a poor fraction of humor; or rather, it is the body to which the soul is wanting; any life it has being false, artificial and irrational. True humor springs not more from the head than from the heart; it is not contempt, its essence is love; it issues not in laughter, but in still smiles, which lie far deeper. It is a sort of inverse sublimity; exalting, as it were, into our affections what is below us, while sublimity draws down into our affections what is above us. The former is scarcely less precious or heart-affecting than the latter; perhaps it is still rarer, and, as a test of genius, still more decisive. It is, in fact, the bloom and perfume, the purest effluence of a deep, fine and loving nature; a nature in harmony with itself, reconciled to the world and its stintedness and contradiction, nay finding in this very contradiction new elements of beauty as well as goodness. Among our own writers, Shakspeare, in this as in all other provinces, must have his place: yet not the first; his humor is heartfelt, exuberant, warm, but seldom the tenderest or most subtle. Swift inclines more to simple irony: yet he had genuine humor too, and of no unloving sort, though cased, like Ben Jonson's, in a most bitter and caustic rind. Sterne follows next; our last specimen of humor, and, with all his faults, our best; our finest, if not our strongest; for *Yorick* and *Corporal Trim* and *Uncle Toby* have yet no brother but in *Don Quixote,* far as *he* lies above them. Cervantes is indeed the purest of all humorists; so gentle and genial, so full yet so ethereal is his humor, and in such accordance with itself and his whole noble nature. The Italian mind is said to abound in humor; yet their classics seem to give us no right emblem of it: except perhaps in Ariosto, there appears little in their current poetry that reaches the region of true humor. In France, since the days of Montaigne, it seems to be nearly extinct. Voltaire, much as he dealt in ridicule, never rises into humor; even with Molière, it is far more an affair of the understanding than of the character.

That, in this point, Richter excels all German authors, is saying much for him, and may be said truly. Lessing has humor, — of a sharp, rigid, substantial, and, on the whole, genial sort; yet the ruling bias of his mind is to logic. So likewise has Wieland, though much diluted by the general *loquacity* of his nature, and impoverished still farther by the influences of a cold, meagre, French scepticism. Among the Ramlers, Gellerts, Hagedorns, of Frederick the Second's time, we find abundance, and delicate in kind too, of that light matter which the French call pleasantry; but little or nothing that deserves the name of humor. In the present age, however, there is Goethe, with a rich true vein; and this sublimated, as it were, to an essence, and blended in still union with his whole mind. Tieck also, among his many fine susceptibilities, is not without a warm keen sense for the ridiculous; and a humor rising, though by short fits, and from a much lower atmosphere, to be poetic. But of all these men, there is none that, in depth, copiousness and intensity of humor, can be compared with Jean Paul. He alone exists in humor; lives, moves and has his being in it. With him it is not so much united to his other qualities, of intellect, fancy, imagination, moral feeling, as these are united to it; or rather unite themselves to it, and grow under its warmth, as in their proper temperature and climate. Not as if we meant to assert that his humor is in all cases perfectly natural and pure; nay, that it is not often extravagant, untrue, or even absurd: but still, on the whole, the core and life of it are genuine, subtle, spiritual. Not without reason have his panegyrists named him "*Jean Paul der Einzige,* Jean Paul the Unique:" in one sense or the other, either as praise or censure, his critics also must adopt this epithet; for surely, in the whole circle of Literature, we look in vain for his parallel. Unite the sportfulness of Rabelais, and the best sensibility of Sterne, with the earnestness, and, even in slight portions, the sublimity of Milton; and let the mosaic brain of old Burton give forth the workings of this strange union, with the pen of Jeremy Bentham!

To say how, with so peculiar a natural endowment, Richter should have shaped his mind by culture, is much harder than to say that he has shaped it wrong. Of affectation we will neither altogether clear him, nor very loudly pronounce him guilty. That his manner of writing is singular, nay in fact a wild complicated Arabesque, no one can deny. But the true question is, How nearly does this manner of writing represent his real manner of thinking and existing? With what degree of freedom does it allow this particular form of being to manifest itself; or what fetters and perversions does it lay on such manifestation? For the great law of culture is: Let each become all that he was created capable of being; expand, if possible, to his full growth; resisting all impediments, casting off all foreign, especially all noxious adhesions; and show himself at length in his own shape and stature, be these what they may. There is no uniform of excellence, either in physical or spiritual Nature: all *genuine* things are what they ought to be. The reindeer is good and beautiful, so likewise is the elephant. In Literature it is the same: "every man," says Lessing, "has his own style, like his own nose." True, there are noses of wonderful dimensions; but no nose can justly be amputated by the public, — not even the nose of Slawkenbergius himself; so it *be* a real nose, and no wooden one put on for deception's sake and mere show!

To speak in grave language, Lessing means, and we agree with him, that the outward style is to be judged of by the inward qualities of the spirit which it is employed to body forth; that, without prejudice to critical propriety well understood, the former may vary into many shapes as the latter varies; that, in short, the grand point for a writer is not to be of this or that external make and fashion, but, in every fashion, to be genuine, vigorous, alive, — alive with his whole being, consciously, and for beneficent results.

Tried by this test, we imagine Richter's wild manner will be found less imperfect than many a very tame one. To the man it may not be unsuitable. In that singular form, there is a fire, a splendor, a benign energy, which persuades us into tolerance, nay into love, of much that might otherwise offend. Above all, this man, alloyed with imperfections as he may be, is consistent and coherent: he is at one with himself; he knows his aims, and pursues them in sincerity of heart, joyfully and with undivided will. A harmonious development of being, the first and last object of all true culture, has been obtained; if not completely, at least more completely than in one of a thousand ordinary men. Nor let us forget that, in such a nature, it was not of easy attainment; that where much was to be developed, some imperfection should be forgiven. It is true, the beaten paths of Literature lead the safeliest to the goal; and the talent pleases us most, which submits to shine with new gracefulness through old forms. Nor is the noblest and most peculiar mind too noble or peculiar for working by prescribed laws: Sophocles, Shakspeare, Cervantes, and in Richter's own age, Goethe, how little did they innovate on the given forms of composition, how much in the spirit they breathed into them! All this is true; and Richter must lose of our esteem in proportion. Much, however, will remain; and why should we quarrel with the high, because it is not the highest? Richter's worst faults are nearly allied to his best merits; being chiefly exuberance of good, irregular squandering of wealth, a dazzling with excess of true light. These things may be pardoned the more readily, as they are little likely to be imitated.

On the whole, Genius has privileges of its own; it selects an orbit for itself; and be this never so eccentric, if it is indeed a celestial orbit, we mere star-gazers must at last compose ourselves; must cease to cavil at it, and begin to observe it, and calculate its laws. That Richter is a new Planet in the intellectual heavens, we dare not affirm; an atmospheric Meteor he is not wholly; perhaps a Comet, that, though with long aberrations, and shrouded in a nebulous veil, has yet its place in the empyrean.

Of Richter's individual Works, of his opinions, his general philosophy of life, we have no room left us to speak. Regarding his Novels, we may say, that, except in some few instances, and those chiefly of the shorter class, they are not what, in strict language, we can term unities: with much *callida junctura* of parts, it is rare that any of them leaves on us the impression of a perfect, homogeneous, indivisible whole. A true work of art requires to be *fused* in the mind of its creator, and, as it were, poured forth (from his imagination, though not from his pen) at one simultaneous gush. Richter's works do not always bear sufficient marks of having been in *fusion;* yet neither are they merely *riveted* together; to say the least, they have been *welded.* A similar remark applies to many of his characters; indeed, more or less to all of them, except such as are entirely humorous, or have a large dash of humor. In this latter province he is at home; a true poet, a maker; his *Siebenkäs,* his *Schmelzle,* even his *Fibel* and *Fixlein* are living figures. But in heroic personages, passionate, massive, overpowering as he is, we have scarcely ever a complete ideal; art has not attained to the concealment of itself. With his heroines again he is more successful; they are often true heroines, though perhaps with too little variety of character; bustling, buxom mothers and housewives, with all the caprices, perversities, and warm generous helpfulness of women; or white, half-angelic creatures, meek, still, long-suffering, high-minded, of tenderest affections, and hearts crushed yet uncomplaining. Supernatural figures he has not attempted; and wisely, for he cannot write without belief. Yet many times he exhibits an imagination of a singularity, nay on the whole, of a truth and grandeur, unexampled elsewhere. In his *Dreams* there is a mystic complexity, a gloom, and amid the dim gigantic half-ghastly shadows, gleamings of a wizard splendor, which almost recall to us the visions of Ezekiel. By readers who have studied the *Dream in the New-year's Eve* we shall not be mistaken.

Richter's Philosophy, a matter of no ordinary interest both as it agrees with the common philosophy of Germany and disagrees with it, must not be touched on for the present. One only observation we shall make: it is not mechanical, or sceptical; it springs not from the forum or the laboratory, but from the depths of the human spirit; and yields as its fairest product a noble system of Morality, and the firmest conviction of Religion. In this latter point we reckon him peculiarly worthy of study. To a careless reader he might seem the wildest of infidels; for nothing can exceed the freedom with which he bandies to and fro the dogmas of religion, nay, sometimes, the highest objects of Christian reverence. There are passages of this sort, which will occur to every reader of Richter; but which, not to fall into the error we have already blamed in Madame de Staël, we shall refrain from quoting. More light is in the following: "Or," inquires he, in his usual abrupt way, "Or are all your Mosques, Episcopal Churches, Pagodas, Chapels of Ease, Tabernacles, and Pantheons, anything else but the Ethnic Forecourt of the Invisible Temple and its Holy of Holies?"[1] Yet, independently of all dogmas, nay perhaps in spite of many, Richter is, in the highest sense of the word, religious. A reverence, not a self-interested fear, but a noble reverence for the spirit of all goodness, forms the crown and glory of his culture. The fiery elements of his nature have been purified under holy influences, and chastened by a principle of mercy and humility into peace and well-doing. An intense and continual faith in man's immortality and native grandeur accompanies him; from amid the vortices of life he looks up to a heavenly loadstar; the solution of what is visible and transient, he finds in what is invisible and eternal. He has doubted, he denies, yet he believes. "When, in your last hour," says he,[2] "when, in your last hour (think of this), all faculty in the broken spirit shall fade away and die into inanity, — imagination, thought, effort, enjoyment, — then at last will the night-flower of Belief alone continue blooming, and refresh with its perfumes in the last darkness."

To reconcile these seeming contradictions, to explain the grounds, the manner, the congruity of Richter's belief, cannot be attempted here. We recommend him to the study, the tolerance, and even the praise, of all men who have inquired into this highest of questions with a right spirit; inquired with the martyr fearlessness, but also with the martyr reverence, of men that love Truth, and will not accept a lie. A frank, fearless, honest, yet truly spiritual faith is of all things the rarest in our time.

Of writings which, though with many reservations, we have praised so much, our hesitating readers may demand some specimen. To unbelievers, unhappily, we have none of a convincing sort to give. Ask us not to represent the Peruvian forests by three twigs plucked from them; or the cataracts of the Nile by a handful of its water! To those, meanwhile, who will look on twigs as mere dissevered twigs, and a handful of water as only so many drops, we present the following. It is a summer Sunday night; Jean Paul is taking leave of the Hukelum Parson and his Wife; like him we have long laughed at them or wept for them; like him, also, we are sad to part from them: —

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[1] Note to *Schmelzle's Journey*. [2] *Levana* p 251.

"We were all of us too deeply moved. We at last tore ourselves asunder from repeated embraces; my friend retired with the soul whom he loves. I remained alone behind with the Night.

"And I walked without aim through woods, through valleys, and over brooks, and through sleeping villages, to enjoy the great Night, like a Day. I walked, and still looked, like the magnet, to the region of midnight, to strengthen my heart at the gleaming twilight, at this upstretching aurora of a morning beneath our feet. White night-butterflies flitted, white blossoms fluttered, white stars fell, and the white snow-powder hung silvery in the high Shadow of the Earth, which reaches beyond the Moon, and which is our Night. Then began the Æolian Harp of the Creation to tremble and to sound, blown on from above; and my immortal Soul was a string in that Harp. — The heart of a brother, everlasting Man, swelled under the everlasting heaven, as the seas swell under the sun and under the moon. — The distant village-clocks struck midnight, mingling, as it were, with the ever-pealing tone of ancient Eternity. — The limbs of my buried ones touched cold on my soul, and drove away its blots, as dead hands heal eruptions of the skin. — I walked silently through little hamlets, and close by their outer churchyards, where crumbled upcast coffin-boards were glimmering, while the once-bright eyes that had lain in them were mouldered into gray ashes. Cold thought! clutch not like a cold spectre at my heart: I look up to the starry sky, and an everlasting chain stretches thither, and over, and below; and all is Life, and Warmth, and Light, and all is Godlike or God. . . .

"Towards morning I descried thy late lights, little city of my dwelling, which I belong to on this side the grave; I returned to the Earth; and in thy steeples, behind the by-advanced great midnight, it struck half-past two: about this hour, in 1794, Mars went down in the west, and the Moon rose in the east; and my soul desired, in grief for the noble warlike blood which is still streaming on the blossoms of Spring: 'Ah, retire, bloody War, like red Mars; and thou, still Peace, come forth like the mild divided Moon.'"[1]

Such, seen through no uncolored medium, but in dim remoteness, and sketched in hurried transitory outline, are some features of Jean Paul Friedrich Richter and his Works. Germany has long loved him; to England also he must one day become known; for a man of this magnitude belongs not to one people, but to the world. What our countrymen may decide of him, still more what may be his fortune with posterity, we will not try to foretell. Time has a strange contracting influence on many a wide-spread fame; yet of Richter we will say, that he may survive much. There is in him that which does not die; that Beauty and Earnestness of soul, that spirit of Humanity, of Love and mild Wisdom, over which the vicissitudes of mode have no sway. This is that excellence of the inmost nature which alone confers immortality on writings; that charm which still, under every defacement, binds us to the pages of our own Hookers, and Taylors, and Brownes, when their way of thought has long ceased to be ours, and the most valued of their merely intellectual opinions have passed away, as ours too must do, with the circumstances and events in which they took their shape or rise. To men of a right mind there may long be in Richter much that has attraction and value. In the moral desert of vulgar Literature, with its sandy wastes, and parched, bitter and too often poisonous shrubs, the Writings of this man will rise in their irregular luxuriance, like a cluster of date-trees, with its greensward and well of water, to refresh the pilgrim, in the sultry solitude, with nourishment and shade.

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[1] End of *Quintus Fixlein.*

STATE OF GERMAN LITERATURE.[1]

[1827.]

These two Books, notwithstanding their diversity of title, are properly parts of one and the same; the *Outlines*, though of prior date in regard to publication, having now assumed the character of sequel and conclusion to the larger Work, — of fourth volume to the other three. It is designed, of course, for the home market; yet the foreign student also will find in it a safe and valuable help, and, in spite of its imperfections, should receive it with thankfulness and good-will. Doubtless we might have wished for a keener discriminative and descriptive talent, and perhaps for a somewhat more catholic spirit, in the writer of such a history; but in their absence we have still much to praise. Horn's literary creed would, on the whole, we believe, be acknowledged by his countrymen as the true one; and this, though it is chiefly from one immovable station that he can survey his subject, he seems heartily anxious to apply with candor and tolerance. Another improvement might have been, a deeper principle of arrangement, a firmer grouping into periods and schools; for, as it stands, the work is more a critical sketch of German Poets, than a history of German Poetry.

Let us not quarrel, however, with our author: his merits as a literary historian are plain, and by no means inconsiderable.

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[1] Edinburgh Review, No. 92. — 1. *Die Poesie und Beredsamkeit der Deutschen, von Luthers Zeit bis zur Gegenwart. Dargestellt von Franz Horn.* (The Poetry and Oratory of the Germans, from Luther's Time to the Present. Exhibited by Franz Horn.) Berlin, 1822, '23, '24. 3 vols. 8vo.

2. *Umrisse zur Geschichte und Kritik der schönen Litteratur Deutschlands während der Jahre* 1790–1818. (Outlines for the History and Criticism of Polite Literature in Germany, during the Years 1790–1818.) By Franz Horn. Berlin, 1819. 8vo.

Without rivalling the almost frightful laboriousness of Bouterwek or Eichhorn, he gives creditable proofs of research and general information, and possesses a lightness in composition, to which neither of these erudite persons can well pretend. Undoubtedly he has a flowing pen, and is at home in this province; not only a speaker of the word, indeed, but a doer of the work; having written, besides his great variety of tracts and treatises, biographical, philosophical and critical, several very deserving works of a poetic sort. He is not, it must be owned, a very strong man, but he is nimble and orderly, and goes through his work with a certain gayety of heart; nay, at times, with a frolicsome alacrity, which might even require to be pardoned. His character seems full of susceptibility; perhaps too much so for its natural vigor. His novels, accordingly, to judge from the few we have read of them, verge towards the sentimental. In the present Work, in like manner, he has adopted nearly all the best ideas of his contemporaries, but with something of an undue vehemence; and he advocates the cause of religion, integrity and true poetic taste with great heartiness and vivacity, were it not that too often his zeal outruns his prudence and insight. Thus, for instance, he declares repeatedly, in so many words, that no mortal can be a poet unless he is a Christian. The meaning here is very good; but why this phraseology? Is it not inviting the simple-minded (not to speak of scoffers, whom Horn very justly sniffs at) to ask, When Homer subscribed the Thirty-nine Articles; or Whether Sadi and Hafiz were really of the Bishop of Peterborough's opinion? Again, he talks too often of "representing the Infinite in the Finite," of expressing the unspeakable, and such high matters. In fact, Horn's style, though extremely readable, has one great fault; it is, to speak it in a single word, an affected style. His stream of meaning, uniformly clear and wholesome in itself, will not flow quietly along its channel; but is ever and anon spurting itself up into epigrams and antithetic jets. Playful he is, and kindly, and, we do believe, honest-hearted; but there is a certain snappishness in him, a frisking abruptness; and then his sport is more a perpetual giggle, than any dignified smile, or even any sufficient laugh with gravity succeeding it. This sentence is among the best we recollect of him, and will partly illustrate what we mean. We submit it, for the sake of its import likewise, to all superfine speculators on the Reformation, in their future contrasts of Luther and Erasmus. "Erasmus," says Horn, "belongs to that species of writers who have all the desire in the world to build God Almighty a magnificent church, — at the same time, however, not giving the Devil any offence; to whom, accordingly, they set up a neat little chapel close by, where you can offer him some touch of sacrifice at a time, and practise a quiet household devotion for him without disturbance." In this style of "witty and conceited mirth," considerable part of the book is written.

But our chief business at present is not with Franz Horn, or his book; of whom, accordingly, recommending his labors to all inquisitive students of German, and himself to good estimation with all good men, we must here take leave. We have a word or two to say on that strange Literature itself; concerning which our readers probably feel more curious to learn what it is, than with what skill it has been judged of.

Above a century ago, the Père Bouhours propounded to himself the pregnant question: *Si un Allemand peut avoir de l'esprit?* Had the Père Bouhours bethought him of what country Kepler and Leibnitz were, or who it was that gave to mankind the three great elements of modern civilization, Gunpowder, Printing and the Protestant Religion, it might have thrown light on his inquiry. Had he known the *Nibelungen Lied*, and where *Reinecke Fuchs*, and *Faust*, and the *Ship of Fools*, and four-fifths of all the popular mythology, humor and romance to be found in Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, took its rise; had he read a page or two of Ulrich Hutten, Opitz, Paul Flemming, Logau, or even Lohenstein and Hoffmannswaldau, all of whom had already lived and written in his day; had the Père Bouhours taken this trouble, — who knows but he might have found, with whatever amazement, that a German *could* actually have a little *esprit*, or perhaps even something better? No such trouble was requisite for the Père Bouhours. Motion *in vacuo* is well known to be speedier and surer than through a resisting medium, especially to imponderous bodies; and so the light Jesuit, unimpeded by facts or principles of any kind, failed not to reach his conclusion; and, in a comfortable frame of mind, to decide, negatively, that a German could *not* have any literary talent.

Thus did the Père Bouhours evince that he had a pleasant wit; but in the end he has paid dear for it. The French, themselves, have long since begun to know something of the Germans, and something also of their own critical Daniel; and now it is by this one *un*timely joke that the hapless Jesuit is doomed to live; for the blessing of full oblivion is denied him, and so he hangs, suspended in his own noose, over the dusky pool, which he struggles toward, but for a great while will not reach. Might his fate but serve as a warning to kindred men of wit, in regard to this and so many other subjects! For surely the pleasure of despising, at all times and in itself a dangerous luxury, is much safer *after* the toil of examining than before it.

We altogether differ from the Père Bouhours in this matter, and must endeavor to discuss it differently. There is, in fact, much in the present aspect of German Literature, not only deserving notice but deep consideration from all thinking men, and far too complex for being handled in the way of epigram. It is always advantageous to think justly of our neighbors; nay, in mere common honesty, it is a duty; and, like every other duty, brings its own reward. Perhaps at the present era this duty is more essential than ever; an era of such promise and such threatening, when so many elements of good and evil are everywhere in conflict, and human society is, as it were, struggling to body itself forth anew, and so many *colored rays* are springing up in this quarter and in that, which only by their union can produce *pure light.* Happily, too, though still a difficult, it is no longer an impossible duty; for the commerce in material things has paved roads for commerce in things spiritual, and a true thought, or a noble creation, passes lightly to us from the remotest countries, provided only our minds be open to receive it. This, indeed, is a rigorous proviso, and a great obstacle lies in it; one which to many must be insurmountable, yet which it is the chief glory of social culture to surmount. For, if a man who mistakes his own contracted individuality for the type of human nature, and deals with whatever contradicts *him* as if it contradicted *this*, is but a pedant, and without true wisdom, be he furnished with partial equipments as he may, — what better shall we think of a nation that, in like manner, isolates itself from foreign influence, regards its own modes as so many laws of nature, and rejects all that is different as unworthy even of examination?

Of this narrow and perverted condition, the French, down almost to our own times, have afforded a remarkable and instructive example; as indeed of late they have been often enough upbraidingly reminded, and are now themselves, in a manlier spirit, beginning to admit. That our countrymen have at any time erred much in this point, cannot, we think, truly be alleged against them. Neither shall we say, with some passionate admirers of Germany, that to the Germans in particular they have been unjust. It is true, the literature and character of that country, which, within the last half-century, have been more worthy perhaps than any other of our study and regard, are still very generally unknown to us, or, what is worse, misknown; but for this there are not wanting less offensive reasons. That the false and tawdry ware, which was in all hands, should reach us before the chaste and truly excellent, which it required some excellence to recognize; that Kotzebue's insanity should have spread faster, by some fifty years, than Lessing's wisdom; that Kant's Philosophy should stand in the background as a dreary and abortive dream, and Gall's Craniology be held out to us from every booth as a reality; — all this lay in the nature of the case. That many readers should draw conclusions from imperfect premises, and by the imports judge too hastily of the stock imported from, was likewise natural. No unfair bias, no unwise indisposition, that we are aware of, has ever been at work in the matter; perhaps, at worst, a degree of indolence, a blamable incuriosity to all products of foreign genius: for what more do we know of recent Spanish or Italian literature, than of German; of Grossi and Manzoni, of Campomanes or Jovellanos, than of Tieck and Richter? Wherever German art, in those forms of it which need no interpreter, has addressed us immediately, our recognition of it has been prompt and hearty; from Dürer to Mengs, from Händel to Weber and Beethoven, we have welcomed the painters and musicians of Germany, not only to our praise, but to our affections and beneficence. Nor, if in their literature we have been more backward, is the literature itself without blame. Two centuries ago, translations from the German were comparatively frequent in England: Luther's *Table-Talk* is still a venerable classic in our language; nay, Jacob Böhme has found a place among us, and this not as a dead letter, but as a living apostle to a still living sect of our religionists. In the next century, indeed, translation ceased; but then it was, in a great measure, because there was little worth translating. The horrors of the Thirty-Years War, followed by the conquests and conflagrations of Louis the Fourteenth, had desolated the country; French influence, extending from the courts of princes to the closets of the learned, lay like a baleful incubus over the far nobler mind of Germany; and all true nationality vanished from its literature, or was heard only in faint tones, which lived in the hearts of the people, but could not reach with any effect to the ears of foreigners.[1] And now that the genius of the country has awakened in its old strength, our attention to it has certainly awakened also; and if we yet know little or nothing of the Germans, it is not because we wilfully do them wrong, but, in good part, because they are somewhat difficult to know.

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[1] Not that the Germans were idle; or altogether engaged, as we too loosely suppose, in the work of commentary and lexicography. On the contrary, they rhymed and romanced with due vigor as to quantity; only the quality was bad. Two facts on this head may deserve mention. In the year 1749 there were found in the library of one virtuoso no fewer than 300 volumes of devotional poetry, containing, says Horn, "a treasure of 33,712 German hymns;" and, much about the same period, one of Gottsched's scholars had amassed as many as 1,500 German novels, all of the seventeenth century. The hymns we understand to be much better than the novels, or rather, perhaps, the novels to be much worse than the hymns. Neither was critical study neglected, nor indeed honest endeavor on all hands to attain improvement: witness the strange books from time to time put forth, and the still stranger institutions established for this purpose. Among the former we have the "Poetical Funnel" (*Poetische Trichter*), manufactured at Nürnberg in 1650, and professing, within six hours, to pour in the whole essence of this difficult art into the most unfurnished

In fact, prepossessions of all sorts naturally enough find their place here. A country which has no national literature, or a literature too insignificant to force its way abroad, must always be, to its neighbors, at least in every important spiritual respect, an unknown and misestimated country. Its towns may figure on our maps; its revenues, population, manufactures, political connections, may be recorded in statistical books: but the character of the people has no symbol and no voice; we cannot know them by speech and discourse, but only by mere sight and outward observation of their manners and procedure. Now, if both sight and speech, if both travellers and native literature, are found but ineffectual in this respect, how incalculably more so the former alone! To seize a character, even that of one man, in its life and secret mechanism, requires a philosopher; to delineate it with truth and

head. Nürnberg also was the chief seat of the famous *Meistersänger* and their *Sängerzünfte*, or Singer-guilds, in which poetry was taught and practised like any other handicraft, and this by sober and well-meaning men, chiefly artisans, who could not understand why labor, which manufactured so many things, should not also manufacture another. Of these tuneful guild-brethren, Hans Sachs, by trade a shoemaker, is greatly the most noted and most notable. His father was a tailor; he himself learned the mystery of song under one Nunnebeck, a weaver. He was an adherent of his great contemporary Luther, who has even deigned to acknowledge his services in the cause of the Reformation. How diligent a laborer Sachs must have been, will appear from the fact, that, in his 74th year (1568), on examining his stock for publication, he found that he had written 6,048 poetical pieces, among which were 208 tragedies and comedies; and this besides having all along kept house, like an honest Nürnberg burgher, by assiduous and sufficient shoemaking! Hans is not without genius, and a shrewd irony; and, above all, the most gay, childlike, yet devout and solid character. A man neither to be despised nor patronized; but left standing on his own basis, as a singular product, and a still legible symbol and clear mirror of the time and country where he lived. His best piece known to us, and many are well worth perusing, is the *Fastnachtsspiel* (Shrovetide Farce) of the *Narrenschneiden*, where the Doctor cures a bloated and lethargic patient by cutting out half a dozen *Fools* from his interior!

impressiveness, is work for a poet. How shall one or two sleek clerical tutors, with here and there a tedium-stricken 'squire, or speculative half-pay captain, give us views on such a subject? How shall a man, to whom all characters of individual men are like sealed books, of which he sees only the title and the covers, decipher, from his four-wheeled vehicle, and depict to us, the character of a nation? He courageously depicts his own optical delusions; notes this to be incomprehensible, that other to be insignificant; much to be good, much to be bad, and most of all indifferent; and so, with a few flowing strokes, completes a picture which, though it may not even resemble any possible object, his countrymen are to take for a national portrait. Nor is the fraud so readily detected: for the character of a people has such complexity of aspect, that even the honest observer knows not always, not perhaps after long inspection, what to determine regarding it. From his, only accidental, point of view, the figure stands before him like the tracings on veined marble, — a mass of mere random lines, and tints, and entangled strokes, out of which a lively fancy may shape almost *any* image. But the image he brings along with him is always the readiest; this is tried, it answers as well as another; and a second voucher now testifies its correctness. Thus each, in confident tones, though it may be with a secret misgiving, repeats his precursor; the hundred times repeated comes in the end to be believed; the foreign nation is now once for all understood, decided on, and registered accordingly; and dunce the thousandth writes of it like dunce the first.

With the aid of literary and intellectual intercourse, much of this falsehood may, no doubt, be corrected: yet even here, sound judgment is far from easy; and most national characters are still, as Hume long ago complained, the product rather of popular prejudice than of philosophic insight. That the Germans, in particular, have by no means escaped such misrepresentation, nay perhaps have had more than the common share of it, cannot, in their circumstances, surprise us. From the time of Opitz and Flemming, to those of Klopstock and Lessing, — that is, from the early part of the seventeenth to the middle of the eighteenth century, — they had scarcely any literature known abroad, or deserving to be known: their political condition, during this same period, was oppressive and every way unfortunate externally; and at home, the nation, split into so many factions and petty states, had lost all feeling of itself as of a nation; and its energies in arts as in arms were manifested only in detail, too often in collision, and always under foreign influence. The French, at once their plunderers and their scoffers, described them to the rest of Europe as a semi-barbarous people; which comfortable fact the rest of Europe was willing enough to take on their word. During the greater part of the last century, the Germans, in our intellectual survey of the world, were quietly omitted; a vague contemptuous ignorance prevailed respecting them; it was a Cimmerian land, where, if a few sparks did glimmer, it was but so as to testify their own existence, too feebly to enlighten *us*.[1] The Germans passed for apprentices in all provinces of art; and many foreign craftsmen scarcely allowed them so much.

Madame de Staël's book has done away with this: all Europe is now aware that the Germans are something; something independent and apart from others; nay something deep, imposing and, if not admirable, wonderful. What that something is, indeed, is still undecided; for this gifted lady's *Allemagne*, in doing much to excite curiosity, has still done little to satisfy or even direct it. We can no longer make ignorance a boast, but we are yet far from having acquired right knowledge; and cavillers, excluded from contemptuous negation, have found a resource in almost as contemptuous assertion. Translators are the same faithless and stolid race that they have ever been: the particle of gold they bring us over is hidden from all but the most patient eye, among ship-loads of yellow sand and sulphur. Gentle Dulness too, in this as in all other things, still loves her joke. The Germans, though much more attended to, are perhaps not less mistaken than before.

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[1] So late as the year 1811, we find, from *Pinkerton's Geography*, the sole representative of German literature to be Gottshed (with his name wrong spelt), "who first introduced a more refined style." — Gottsched has been dead the greater part of a century; and, for the last fifty years, ranks among the Germans somewhat as Prynne or Alexander Ross does among ourselves. A man of a cold, rigid, perseverant character, who mistook himself for a poet and the perfection of critics, and had skill to pass current during the greater part of his literary life for such. On the strength of his *Boileau* and *Batteux*, he long reigned supreme; but it was like Night, in rayless majesty, and over a slumbering people. They awoke before his death, and hurled him, perhaps too indignantly, into his native Abyss.

Doubtless, however, there is in this increased attention a progress towards the truth; which it is only investigation and discussion that can help us to find. The study of German literature has already taken such firm root among us, and is spreading so visibly, that by and by, as we believe, the true character of it must and will become known. A result, which is to bring us into closer and friendlier union with forty millions of civilized men, cannot surely be other than desirable. If they have precious truth to impart, we shall receive it as the highest of all gifts; if error, we shall not only reject it, but explain it and trace out its origin, and so help our brethren also to reject it. In either point of view, and for all profitable purposes of national intercourse, correct knowledge is the first and indispensable preliminary.

Meanwhile, errors of all sorts prevail on this subject: even among men of sense and liberality we have found so much hallucination, so many groundless or half-grounded objections to German Literature, that the tone in which a multitude of other men speak of it cannot appear extraordinary. To much of this, even a slight knowledge of the Germans would furnish a sufficient answer. We have thought it might be useful were the chief of these objections marshalled in distinct order, and examined with what degree of light and fairness is at our disposal. In attempting this, we are vain enough, for reasons already stated, to fancy ourselves discharging what is in some sort a national duty. It is unworthy of one great people to think falsely of another; it is unjust, and therefore unworthy. Of the injury it does to ourselves we do not speak, for that is an inferior consideration: yet surely if the grand principle of free intercourse is so profitable in material commerce, much more must it be in the commerce of the mind, the products of which are thereby not so much transported out of one country into another, as multiplied over all, for the benefit of all, and without loss to any. If that man is a benefactor to the world who causes two ears of corn to grow where only one grew before, much more is he a benefactor who causes two truths to grow up together in harmony and mutual confirmation, where before only one stood solitary, and, on that side at least, intolerant and hostile.

In dealing with the host of objections which front us on this subject, we think it may be convenient to range them under two principal heads. The first, as respects chiefly unsoundness or imperfection of sentiment; an error which may in general be denominated *Bad Taste.* The second, as respects chiefly a wrong condition of intellect; an error which may be designated by the general title of *Mysticism.* Both of these, no doubt, are partly connected; and each, in some degree, springs from and returns into the other: yet, for present purposes, the divisions may be precise enough.

First, then, of the first: It is objected that the Germans have a radically bad taste. This is a deep-rooted objection, which assumes many forms, and extends through many ramifications. Among men of less acquaintance with the subject of German taste, or of taste in general, the spirit of the accusation seems to be somewhat as follows: That the Germans, with much natural susceptibility, are still in a rather coarse and uncultivated state of mind; displaying, with the energy and other virtues of a rude people, many of their vices also; in particular, a certain wild and headlong temper, which seizes on all things too hastily and impetuously; weeps, storms, loves, hates, too fiercely and vociferously; delighting in coarse excitements, such as flaring contrasts, vulgar horrors, and all sorts of showy exaggeration. Their literature, in particular, is thought to dwell with peculiar complacency among wizards and ruined towers, with mailed knights, secret tribunals, monks, spectres and banditti: on the other hand, there is an undue love of moonlight, and mossy fountains, and the moral sublime: then we have descriptions of things which should not be described; a general want of tact; nay often a hollowness and want of sense. In short, the German Muse comports herself, it is said, like a passionate and rather fascinating, but tumultuous, uninstructed and but half-civilized Muse. A *belle sauvage* at best, we can only love her with a sort of supercilious tolerance; often she tears a passion to rags; and, in her tumid vehemence, struts without meaning, and to the offence of all literary decorum.

Now, in all this there is not wanting a certain degree of truth. If any man will insist on taking Heinse's *Ardinghello* and Miller's *Siegwart*, and the works of Veit Weber the Younger, and, above all, the everlasting Kotzebue, as his specimens of German literature, he may establish many things. Black Forests, and the glories of Lubberland; sensuality and horror, the spectre nun, and the charmed moonshine, shall not be wanting. Boisterous outlaws also, with huge whiskers and the most cat-o'-mountain aspect; tear-stained sentimentalists, the grimmest man-haters, ghosts and the like suspicious characters, will be found in abundance. We are little read in this bowl-and-dagger department; but we do understand it to have been at one time rather diligently cultivated; though at present it seems to be mostly relinquished as unproductive. Other forms of Unreason have taken its place; which in their turn must yield to still other forms; for it is the nature of this goddess to descend in frequent *avatars* among men. Perhaps not less than five hundred volumes of such stuff could still be collected from the bookstalls of Germany. By which truly we may learn that there is in that country a class of unwise men and unwise women; that many readers there labor under a degree of ignorance and mental vacancy, and read not actively but passively, not to learn but to be amused. Is this fact so very new to us? Or what should we think of a German critic that selected his specimens of British literature from the *Castle Spectre*, Mr. Lewis's *Monk*, or the *Mysteries of Udolpho*, and *Frankenstein or the Modern Prometheus?* Or would he judge rightly of our dramatic taste, if he took his extracts from Mr. Egan's *Tom and Jerry;* and told his readers, as he might truly do, that *no* play had ever enjoyed such currency on the English stage as this most classic performance? We

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think, not. In like manner, till some author of acknowledged merit shall so write among the Germans, and be approved of by critics of acknowledged merit among them, or at least secure for himself some permanency of favor among the million, we can prove nothing by such instances. That there is so perverse an author, or so blind a critic, in the whole compass of German literature, we have no hesitation in denying.

But farther: among men of deeper views, and with regard to works of really standard character, we find, though not the same, a similar objection repeated. Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*, it is said, and *Faust*, are full of bad taste also. With respect to the taste in which they are written, we shall have occasion to say somewhat hereafter: meanwhile we may be permitted to remark that the objection would have more force, did it seem to originate from a more mature consideration of the subject. We have heard few English criticisms of such works, in which the first condition of an approach to accuracy was complied with; — a transposition of the critic into the author's point of vision, a survey of the author's means and objects as they lay before himself, and a just trial of these by rules of universal application. *Faust*, for instance, passes with many of us for a mere tale of sorcery and art-magic. It would scarcely be more unwise to consider *Hamlet* as depending for its main interest on the ghost that walks in it, than to regard *Faust* as a production of that sort. For the present, therefore, this objection may be set aside; or at least may be considered not as an assertion, but an inquiry, the answer to which may turn out rather that the German taste is different from ours, than that it is worse. Nay, with regard even to difference, we should scarcely reckon it to be of great moment. Two nations that agree in estimating Shakspeare as the highest of all poets, can differ in no essential principle, if they understood one another, that relates to poetry.

Nevertheless, this opinion of our opponents has attained a certain degree of consistency with itself; one thing is thought to throw light on another; nay, a quiet little theory has been propounded to explain the whole phenomenon. The cause of this bad taste, we are assured, lies in the condition of the German authors. These, it seems, are generally very poor; the ceremonial law of the country excludes them from all society with the great; they cannot acquire the polish of drawing-rooms, but must live in mean houses, and therefore write and think in a mean style.

Apart from the truth of these assumptions, and in respect of the theory itself, we confess there is something in the face of it that afflicts us. Is it, then, so certain that taste and riches are indissolubly connected? That truth of feeling must ever be preceded by weight of purse, and the eyes be dim for universal and eternal Beauty, till they have long rested on gilt walls and costly furniture? To the great body of mankind this were heavy news; for, of the thousand, scarcely one is rich, or connected with the rich; nine hundred and ninety-nine have always been poor, and must always be so. We take the liberty of questioning the whole postulate. We think that, for acquiring true poetic taste, riches, or association with the rich, are distinctly among the minor requisites; that, in fact, they have little or no concern with the matter. This we shall now endeavor to make probable.

Taste, if it mean anything but a paltry connoisseurship, must mean a general susceptibility to truth and nobleness; a sense to discern, and a heart to love and reverence, all beauty, order, goodness, wheresoever or in whatsoever forms and accompaniments they are to be seen. This surely implies, as its chief condition, not any given external rank or situation, but a finely gifted mind, purified into harmony with itself, into keenness and justness of vision; above all, kindled into love and generous admiration. Is culture of this sort found exclusively among the higher ranks? We believe it proceeds less from without than within, in every rank. The charms of Nature, the majesty of Man, the infinite loveliness of Truth and Virtue, are not hidden from the eye of the poor; but from the eye of the vain, the corrupted and self-seeking, be he poor or rich. In old ages, the humble Minstrel, a mendicant, and lord of nothing but his harp and his own free soul, had intimations of those glories, while to the proud Baron in his barbaric halls they were unknown. Nor is there still any aristocratic monopoly of judgment more than of genius: for as to that *Science of Negation*, which is taught peculiarly by men of professed elegance, we confess we hold it rather cheap. It is a necessary, but decidedly a subordinate accomplishment; nay, if it be rated as the highest, it becomes a ruinous vice. This is an old truth; yet ever needing new application and enforcement. Let us know what to love, and we shall know also what to reject; what to affirm, and we shall know also what to deny: but it is dangerous to *begin* with denial, and fatal to end with it. To deny is easy; nothing is sooner learnt or more generally practised: as matters go, we need no man of polish to teach it; but rather, if possible, a hundred men of wisdom to show us its limits, and teach us its reverse.

Such is our hypothesis of the case: how stands it with the facts? Are the fineness and truth of sense manifested by the artist found, in most instances, to be proportionate to his wealth and elevation of acquaintance? Are they found to have any perceptible relation either with the one or the other? We imagine, not. Whose taste in painting, for instance, is truer and finer than Claude Lorraine's? And was not he a poor color-grinder; outwardly the meanest of menials? Where, again, we might ask, lay Shakspeare's rent-roll; and what generous peer took him by the hand and unfolded to him the "open secret" of the Universe; teaching him that this was beautiful, and that not so? Was he not a peasant by birth, and by fortune something lower; and was it not thought much, even in the height of his reputation, that Southampton allowed him equal patronage with the zanies, jugglers and bear-wards of the time? Yet compare his taste, even as it respects the negative side of things; for, in regard to the positive and far higher side, it admits no comparison with any other mortal's, — compare it, for instance, with the taste of Beaumont and Fletcher, his contemporaries, men of rank and education, and of fine genius like himself. Tried even by the nice, fastidious and in great part false and artificial delicacy of modern times, how stands it with the two parties; with the gay triumphant men of fashion, and the poor vagrant linkboy? Does the latter sin against, we shall not say taste, but etiquette, as the former do? For one line, for one word, which some Chesterfield might wish blotted from the first, are there not in the others whole pages and scenes which, with palpitating heart, he would hurry into deepest night? This too, observe, respects not their genius, but their culture; not their appropriation of beauties, but their rejection of deformities, by supposition the grand and peculiar result of high breeding! Surely, in such instances, even that humble supposition is ill borne out.

The truth of the matter seems to be, that with the culture of a genuine poet, thinker or other artist, the influence of rank has no exclusive or even special concern. For men of action, for senators, public speakers, political writers, the case may be different; but of such we speak not at present. Neither do we speak of imitators, and the crowd of mediocre men, to whom fashionable life sometimes gives an external inoffensiveness, often compensated by a frigid malignity of character. We speak of men who, from amid the perplexed and conflicting elements of their every-day existence, are to form themselves into harmony and wisdom, and show forth the same wisdom to others that exist along with them. To such a man, high life, as it is called, will be a province of human life, but nothing more. He will study to deal with it as he deals with all forms of mortal being; to do it justice, and to draw instruction from it: but his light will come from a loftier region, or he wanders forever in darkness; dwindles into a man of *vers de société*, or attains at best to be a Walpole or a Caylus. Still less can we think that he is to be viewed as a hireling; that his excellence will be regulated by his pay. "Sufficiently provided for from within, he has need of little from without:" food and raiment, and an unviolated home, will be given him in the rudest land; and with these, while the kind earth is round him, and the everlasting heaven is over him, the world has little more that it can give. Is he poor? So also were Homer and Socrates; so was Samuel Johnson; so was John Milton.

Shall we reproach him with his poverty, and infer that, because he is poor, he must likewise be worthless? God forbid that the time should ever come when he too shall esteem riches the synonym of good! The spirit of Mammon has a wide empire; but it cannot, and must not, be worshipped in the Holy of Holies. Nay, does not the heart of every genuine disciple of literature, however mean his sphere, instinctively deny this principle, as applicable either to himself or another? Is it not rather true, as D'Alembert has said, that for every man of letters, who deserves that name, the motto and the watchword will be FREEDOM, TRUTH, and even this same POVERTY; that if he fear the last, the two first can never be made sure to him?

We have stated these things, to bring the question somewhat nearer its real basis; not for the sake of the Germans, who nowise need the admission of them. The German authors are not poor; neither are they excluded from association with the wealthy and well-born. On the contrary, we scruple not to say, that in both these respects they are considerably better situated than our own. Their booksellers, it is true, cannot pay as ours do; yet, there as here, a man lives by his writings; and, to compare *Jördens* with *Johnson* and *D'Israeli*, somewhat better there than here. No case like our own noble Otway's has met us in their biographies; Boyces and Chattertons are much rarer in German than in English history. But farther, and what is far more important: From the number of universities, libraries, collections of art, museums, and other literary or scientific institutions of a public or private nature, we question whether the chance which a meritorious man of letters has before him, of obtaining some permanent appointment, some independent civic existence, is not a hundred to one in favor of the German, compared with the Englishman. This is a weighty item, and indeed the weightiest of all; for it will be granted, that, for the votary of literature, the relation of entire dependence on the merchants of literature is, at best, and however liberal the terms, a highly questionable one. It tempts him daily and hourly to sink from an artist into a manufacturer; nay, so precarious, fluctuating and every way unsatisfactory must his civic and economic concerns become, that too many of his class cannot even attain the praise of common honesty as manufacturers. There is, no doubt, a spirit of martyrdom, as we have asserted, which can sustain this too: but few indeed have the spirit of martyrs; and that state of matters is the safest which requires it least. The German authors, moreover, to their credit be it spoken, seem to set less store by wealth than many of ours. There have been prudent, quiet men among them, who actually appeared not to want more wealth; whom wealth could not tempt, either to this hand or that, from their preappointed aims. Neither must we think so hardly of the German nobility as to believe them insensible to genius, or of opinion that a patent from the Lion King is so superior to "a patent direct from Almighty God." A fair proportion of the German authors are themselves men of rank: we mention only, as of our own time, and notable in other respects, the two Stolbergs and Novalis. Let us not be unjust to this class of persons. It is a poor error to figure them as wrapt up in ceremonial stateliness, avoiding the most gifted man of a lower station; and, for their own supercilious triviality, themselves avoided by all truly gifted men. On the whole, we should change our notion of the German nobleman: that ancient, thirsty, thick-headed, sixteen-quartered Baron, who still hovers in our minds, never did exist in such perfection, and is now as extinct as our own Squire Western. His descendant is a man of other culture, other aims and other habits. We question whether there is an aristocracy in Europe, which, taken as a whole, both in a public and private capacity, more honors art and literature, and does more both in public and private to encourage them. Excluded from society! What, we would ask, was Wieland's, Schiller's, Herder's, Johannes Müller's society? Has not Goethe, by birth a Frankfort burgher, been, since his twenty-sixth year, the companion, not of nobles but of princes, and for half his life a minister of state? And is not this man, unrivalled in so many far deeper qualities, known also and felt to be unrivalled in nobleness of breeding and bearing; fit not to learn of princes in this respect, but by the example of his daily life to teach them?

We hear much of the munificent spirit displayed among the better classes in England; their high estimation of the arts, and generous patronage of the artist. We rejoice to hear it; we hope it is true, and will become truer and truer. We hope that a great change has taken place among these classes, since the time when Bishop Burnet could write of them, "They are for the most part the *worst* instructed, and the *least* knowing, of any of their rank I ever went among!" Nevertheless, let us arrogate to ourselves no exclusive praise in this particular. Other nations can appreciate the arts, and cherish their cultivators, as well as we. Nay, while learning from us in many other matters, we suspect the Germans might even teach us somewhat in regard to this. At all events, the pity, which certain of our authors express for the civil condition of their brethren in that country is, from such a quarter, a superfluous feeling. Nowhere, let us rest assured, is genius more devoutly honored than there, by all ranks of men, from peasants and burghers up to legislators and kings. It was but last year that the Diet of the Empire passed an Act in favor of one individual poet: the Final Edition of Goethe's Works was guaranteed to be protected against commercial injury in every State of Germany; and special assurances to that effect were sent him, in the kindest terms, from all the Authorities there assembled, some of them the highest in his country or in Europe. Nay, even while we write, are not the newspapers recording a visit from the Sovereign of Bavaria in person to the same venerable man? — a mere ceremony perhaps, but one which almost recalls to us the era of the antique Sages and the Grecian Kings.

This hypothesis, therefore, it would seem, is not supported by facts, and so returns to its original elements. The causes it alleges are impossible: but, what is still more fatal, the effect it proposes to account for has, in reality, no existence. We venture to deny that the Germans are defective in taste; even as a nation, as a public, taking one thing with another, we imagine they may stand comparison with any of their neighbors; as writers, as critics, they may decidedly court it. True, there is a mass of dulness, awkwardness and false susceptibility in the lower regions of their literature: but is not bad taste endemical in such regions of every literature under the sun? Pure Stupidity, indeed, is of a quiet nature, and content to be merely stupid. But seldom do we find it pure; seldom unadulterated with some tincture of ambition, which drives it into new and strange metamorphoses. Here it has assumed a contemptuous trenchant air, intended to represent superior tact, and a sort of all-wisdom; there a truculent atrabilious scowl, which is to stand for passionate strength: now we have an outpouring of tumid fervor; now a fruitless, asthmatic hunting after wit and humor. Grave or gay, enthusiastic or derisive, admiring or despising, the dull man would be something which he is not and cannot be. Shall we confess that, of these two common extremes, we reckon the German error considerably the more harmless, and, in our day, by far the more curable? Of unwise admiration much may be hoped, for much good is really in it: but unwise contempt is itself a negation; nothing comes of it, for it *is* nothing.

To judge of a national taste, however, we must raise our view from its transitory modes to its perennial models; from the mass of vulgar writers, who blaze out and are extinguished with the popular delusion which they flatter, to those few who are admitted to shine with a pure and lasting lustre; to whom, by common consent, the eyes of the people are turned, as to its loadstars and celestial luminaries. Among German writers of this stamp, we would ask any candid reader of them, let him be of what country or creed he might, whether bad taste struck him as a prevailing characteristic. Was Wieland's taste uncultivated? Taste, we should say, and taste of the very species which a disciple of the Negative School would call the highest, formed the great object of his life; the perfection he unweariedly endeavored after, and, more than any other perfection, has attained. The most fastidious Frenchman might read him, with admiration of his merely French qualities. And is not Klopstock, with his clear enthusiasm, his azure purity, and heavenly if still somewhat cold and lunar light, a man of taste? His *Messias* reminds us oftener of no other poets than of Virgil and Racine. But it is to Lessing that an Englishman would turn with readiest affection. We cannot but wonder that more of this man is not known among us; or that the knowledge of him has not done more to remove such misconceptions. Among all the writers of the eighteenth century, we will not except even Diderot and David Hume, there is not one of a more compact and rigid intellectual structure; who more distinctly knows what he is aiming at, or with more gracefulness, vigor and precision sets it forth to his readers. He thinks with the clearness and piercing sharpness of the most expert logician; but a genial fire pervades him, a wit, a heartiness, a general richness and fineness of nature, to which most logicians are strangers. He is a sceptic in many things, but the noblest of sceptics; a mild, manly, half-careless enthusiasm struggles through his indignant unbelief: he stands before us like a toilworn but unwearied and heroic champion, earning not the conquest but the battle; as indeed himself admits to us, that "it is not the finding of truth, but the honest search for it, that profits." We confess, we should be entirely at a loss for the literary creed of that man who reckoned Lessing other than a thoroughly cultivated writer; nay, entitled to rank, in this particular, with the most distinguished writers of any existing nation. As a poet, as a critic, philosopher, or controversialist, his style will be found precisely such as we of England are accustomed to admire most; brief, nervous, vivid; yet quiet, without glitter or antithesis; idiomatic, pure without purism; transparent, yet full of character and reflex hues of meaning. "Every sentence," says Horn, and justly, "is like a phalanx;" not a word wrong-placed, not a word that could be spared; and it forms itself so calmly and lightly, and stands in its completeness, so gay, yet so impregnable! As a poet he contemptuously denied himself all merit; but his readers have not taken him at his word: here too a similar felicity of style attends him; his plays, his *Minna von Barnhelm*, his *Emilie Galotti*, his *Nathan der Weise*, have a genuine and graceful poetic life; yet no works known to us in any language are purer from exaggeration, or any appearance of falsehood. They are pictures, we might say, painted not in colors, but in crayons; yet a strange attraction lies in them; for the figures are grouped into the finest attitudes, and true and spirit-speaking in every line. It is with his style chiefly that we have to do here; yet we must add, that the matter of his works is not less meritorious. His Criticism and philosophic or religious Scepticism were of a higher mood than had yet been heard in Europe, still more in Germany: his *Dramaturgie* first exploded the pretensions of the French theatre, and, with irresistible conviction, made Shakspeare known to his countrymen; preparing the way for a brighter era in their literature, the chief men of which still thankfully look back to Lessing as their patriarch. His *Laocoon*, with its deep glances into the philosophy of Art, his *Dialogues of Freemasons*, a work of far higher import than its title indicates, may yet teach many things to most of us, which we know not, and ought to know.

With Lessing and Klopstock might be joined, in this respect, nearly every one, we do not say of their distinguished, but even of their tolerated contemporaries. The two Jacobis, known more or less in all countries, are little known here, if they are accused of wanting literary taste. These are men, whether as thinkers or poets, to be regarded and admired for their mild and lofty wisdom, the devoutness, the benignity and calm grandeur of their philosophical views. In such, it were strange if among so many high merits, this lower one of a just and elegant style, which is indeed their natural and even necessary product, had been wanting. We recommend the elder Jacobi no less for his clearness than for his depth; of the younger, it may be enough in this point of view to say, that the chief praisers of his earlier poetry were the French. Neither are Hamann and Mendelssohn, who could meditate deep thoughts, defective in the power of uttering them with propriety. The *Phædon* of the latter, in its chaste precision and simplicity of style, may almost remind us of Xenophon: Socrates, to our mind, has spoken in no modern language so like Socrates, as here, by the lips of this wise and cultivated Jew.[1]

Among the poets and more popular writers of the time, the case is the same: Utz, Gellert, Cramer, Ramler, Kleist, Hagedorn, Rabener, Gleim, and a multitude of lesser men, whatever excellences they might want, certainly are not chargeable with bad taste. Nay, perhaps of all writers they are the least chargeable with it: a certain clear, light, unaffected elegance, of a higher nature than French elegance, it might be, yet to the exclusion of all very deep or genial qualities, was the excellence they strove after, and, for the most part, in a fair measure attained. They resemble English writers of the same, or perhaps an earlier period, more than any other foreigners: apart from Pope, whose influence is visible enough, Beattie, Logan, Wilkie, Glover, unknown perhaps to any of them, might otherwise have almost seemed their models. Goldsmith also would rank among them; perhaps in regard to true poetic genius, at their head, for none of them has left us a *Vicar of Wakefield;* though, in regard to judgment, knowledge, general talent, his place would scarcely be so high.

The same thing holds in general, and with fewer drawbacks, of the somewhat later and more energetic race, denominated the *Göttingen School;* in contradistinction from the *Saxon*, to which Rabener, Cramer and Gellert directly belonged, and most of those others indirectly. Hölty, Bürger, the two Stolbergs, are men whom Bossu might measure with his scales and compasses as strictly as he pleased. Of Herder, Schiller, Goethe, we speak not here: they are men of another stature and form of movement, whom Bossu's scale and compasses could not measure without difficulty, or rather not at all. To say that such men wrote with taste of this sort, were saying little; for this forms not the apex, but the basis, in their conception of style; a quality not to be paraded as an excellence, but to be understood as indispensable, as there by necessity and like a thing of course.

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[1] The history of Mendelssohn is interesting in itself, and full of encouragement to all lovers of self-improvement. At thirteen he was a wandering Jewish beggar, without health, without home, almost without a language,—for the jargon of broken Hebrew and provincial German which he spoke could scarcely be called one. At middle age he could write this *Phædon;* was a man of wealth and breeding, and ranked among the teachers of his age. Like Pope, he abode by his original creed, though often solicited to change it: indeed, the grand problem of his life was to better the inward and outward condition of his own ill-fated people; for whom he actually accomplished much benefit. He was a mild, shrewd and worthy man; and might well love *Phædon* and Socrates, for his own character was Socratic. He was a friend of Lessing's: indeed, a pupil; for Lessing, having accidentally met him at chess, recognized the spirit that lay struggling under such incumbrances, and generously undertook to help him. By teaching the poor Jew a little Greek, he disenchanted him from the Talmud and the Rabbins. The two were afterwards colaborers in Nicolai's *Deutsche Bibliothek,* the first German *Review* of any character; which, however, in the hands of Nicolai himself, it subsequently lost. Mendelssohn's Works have mostly been translated into French.

In truth, for it must be spoken out, our opponents are widely astray in this matter; so widely that their views of it are not only dim and perplexed, but altogether imaginary and delusive. It is proposed to school the Germans in the Alphabet of taste; and the Germans are already busied with their Accidence! Far from being behind other nations in the practice or science of Criticism, it is a fact, for which we fearlessly refer to all competent judges, that they are distinctly and even considerably in advance. We state what is already known to a great part of Europe to be true. Criticism has assumed a new form in Germany; it proceeds on other principles, and proposes to itself a higher aim. The grand question is not now a question concerning the qualities of diction, the coherence of metaphors, the fitness of sentiments, the general logical truth, in a work of art, as it was some half-century ago among most critics; neither is it a question mainly of a psychological sort, to be answered by discovering and delineating the peculiar nature of the poet from his poetry, as is usual with the best of our own critics at present: but it is, not indeed exclusively, but inclusively of those two other questions, properly and ultimately a question on the essence and peculiar life of the poetry itself. The first of these questions, as we see it answered, for instance, in the criticisms of Johnson and Kames, relates, strictly speaking, to the *garment* of poetry; the second, indeed, to its *body* and material existence, a much higher point; but only the last to its *soul* and spiritual existence, by which alone can the body, in its movements and phases, be *informed* with significance and rational life. The problem is not now to determine by what mechanism Addison composed sentences and struck out similitudes; but by what far finer and more mysterious mechanism Shakspeare organized his dramas, and gave life and individuality to his Ariel and his Hamlet. Wherein lies that life; how have they attained that shape and individuality? Whence comes that empyrean fire, which irradiates their whole being, and pierces, at least in starry gleams, like a diviner thing, into all hearts? Are these dramas of his not verisimilar only, but true; nay, truer than reality itself, since the essence of unmixed reality is bodied forth in them under more expressive symbols? What is this unity of theirs; and can our deeper inspection discern it to be indivisible, and existing by necessity, because each work springs, as it were, from the general elements of all Thought, and grows up therefrom, into form and expansion by its own growth? Not only who was the poet, and how did he compose; but what and how was the poem, and why was it a poem and not rhymed eloquence, creation and not figured passion? These are the questions for the critic. Criticism stands like an interpreter between the inspired and the uninspired; between the prophet and those who hear the melody of his words, and catch some glimpse of their material meaning, but understand not their deeper import. She pretends to open for us this deeper import; to clear our sense that it may discern the pure brightness of this eternal Beauty, and recognize it as heavenly, under all forms where it looks forth, and reject, as of the earth earthy, all forms, be their material splendor what it may, where no gleaming of that other shines through.

This is the task of Criticism, as the Germans understand it. And how do they accomplish this task? By a vague declamation clothed in gorgeous mystic phraseology? By vehement tumultuous anthems to the poet and his poetry; by epithets and laudatory similitudes drawn from Tartarus and Elysium, and all intermediate terrors and glories; whereby, in truth, it is rendered clear both that the poet is an extremely great poet, and also that the critic's allotment of understanding, overflowed by these Pythian raptures, has unhappily melted into deliquium? Nowise in this manner do the Germans proceed: but by rigorous scientific inquiry; by appeal to principles which, whether correct or not, have been deduced patiently, and by long investigation, from the highest and calmest regions of Philosophy. For this finer portion of their Criticism is now also embodied in systems; and standing, so far as these reach, coherent, distinct and methodical, no less than, on their much shallower foundation, the systems of Boileau and Blair. That this new Criticism is a complete, much more a certain science, we are far from meaning to affirm: the *æsthetic* theories of Kant, Herder, Schiller, Goethe, Richter, vary in external aspect, according to the varied habits of the individual; and can at best only be regarded as approximations to the truth, or modifications of it; each critic representing it, as it harmonizes more or less perfectly with the other intellectual persuasions of his own mind, and of different classes of minds that resemble his. Nor can we here undertake to inquire what degree of such approximation to the truth there is in each or all of these writers; or in Tieck and the two Schlegels, who, especially the latter, have labored so meritoriously in reconciling these various opinions; and so successfully in impressing and diffusing the best spirit of them, first in their own country, and now also in several others. Thus much, however, we will say: That we reckon the mere circumstance of such a science being in existence, a ground of the highest consideration, and worthy the best attention of all inquiring men. For we should err widely if we thought that this new tendency of critical science pertains to Germany alone. It is a European tendency, and springs from the general condition of intellect in Europe. We ourselves have all, for the last thirty years, more or less distinctly felt the necessity of such a science: witness the neglect into which our Blairs and Bossus have silently fallen; our increased and increasing admiration, not only of Shakspeare, but of all his contemporaries, and of all who breathe any portion of his spirit; our controversy whether Pope was a poet; and so much vague effort on the part of our best critics everywhere to express some still unexpressed idea concerning the nature of true poetry; as if they felt in their hearts that a pure glory, nay a divineness, belonged to it, for which they had as yet no name and no intellectual form. But in Italy too, in France itself, the same thing is visible. Their grand controversy, so hotly urged, between the *Classicists* and *Romanticists*, in which the Schlegels are assumed, much too loosely, on all hands, as the patrons and generalissimos of the latter, shows us sufficiently what spirit is at work in that long-stagnant literature. Doubtless this turbid fermentation of the elements will at length settle into clearness, both there and here, as in Germany it has already in a great measure done; and perhaps a more serene and genial poetic day is everywhere to be expected with some confidence. How much the example of the Germans may have to teach us in this particular, needs no farther exposition.

The authors and first promulgators of this new critical doctrine were at one time contemptuously named the *New School;* nor was it till after a war of all the few good heads in the nation with all the many bad ones had ended as such wars must ever do,[1] that these critical principles were generally adopted; and their assertors found to be no *School*, or new heretical Sect, but the ancient primitive Catholic Communion, of which all sects that had any living light in them were but members and subordinate modes. It is, indeed, the most sacred article of this creed to preach and practise universal tolerance. Every literature of the world has been cultivated by the Germans; and to every literature they have studied to give due honor. Shakspeare and Homer, no doubt, occupy alone the loftiest station in the poetical Olympus; but there is space in it for all true Singers out of every age and clime. Ferdusi and the primeval Mythologists of Hindostan live in brotherly union with the Troubadours and ancient Story-tellers of the West. The wayward mystic gloom of Calderon, the lurid fire of Dante, the auroral light of Tasso, the clear icy glitter of Racine, all are acknowledged and reverenced; nay in the celestial forecourt an abode has been appointed for the Gressets and Delilles, that no spark of inspiration, no tone of mental music, might remain unrecognized. The Germans study foreign nations in a spirit which deserves to be oftener imitated. It is their honest endeavor to understand each, with its own peculiarities, in its own special manner of existing; not that they may praise it, or censure it, or attempt to alter if, but simply that they may see this manner of existing as the nation itself sees it, and so participate in whatever worth or beauty it has brought into being. Of all literatures, accordingly, the German has the best as well as the most translations; men like Goethe, Schiller, Wieland, Schlegel, Tieck, have not disdained this task. Of Shakspeare there are three entire versions admitted to be good; and we know not how many partial, or considered as bad. In their criticisms of him, we ourselves have long ago admitted that no such clear judgment or hearty appreciation of his merits had ever been exhibited by any critic of our own.

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[1] It began in Schiller's *Musenalmanach* for 1797. The *Xenien* (a series of philosophic epigrams jointly by Schiller and Goethe) descended there unexpectedly, like a flood of ethereal fire, on the German literary world; quickening all that was noble into new life, but visiting the ancient empire of Dulness with astonishment and unknown pangs. The agitation was extreme; scarcely since the age of Luther has there been such stir and strife in the intellect of Germany; indeed, scarcely since that age has there been a controversy, if we consider its ultimate bearings on the best and noblest interests of mankind, so important as this, which, for the time, seemed only to turn on metaphysical subtleties, and matters of mere elegance. Its farther applications became apparent by degrees.

To attempt stating in separate aphorisms the doctrines of this new poetical system, would, in such space as is now allowed us, be to insure them of misapprehension. The science of Criticism, as the Germans practise it, is no study of an hour; for it springs from the depths of thought, and remotely or immediately connects itself with the subtlest problems of all philosophy. One characteristic of it we may state, the obvious parent of many others. Poetic beauty, in its pure essence, is not, by this theory, as by all our theories, from Hume's to Alison's, derived from anything external, or of merely intellectual origin; not from association, or any reflex or reminiscence of mere sensations; nor from natural love, either of imitation, of similarity in dissimilarity, of excitement by contrast, or of seeing difficulties overcome. On the contrary, it is assumed as underived; not borrowing its existence from such sources, but as lending to most of these their significance and principal charm for the mind. It dwells and is born in the inmost Spirit of Man, united to all love of Virtue, to all true belief in God; or rather, it is one with this love and this belief, another phase of the same highest principle in the mysterious infinitude of the human Soul. To apprehend this beauty of poetry, in its full and purest brightness, is not easy, but difficult; thousands on thousands eagerly read poems, and attain not the smallest taste of it; yet to all uncorrupted hearts, some effulgences of this heavenly glory are here and there revealed; and to apprehend it clearly and wholly, to acquire and maintain a sense and heart that sees and worships it, is the last perfection of all humane culture. With mere readers for amusement, therefore, this Criticism has, and can have, nothing to do; these find their amusement, in less or greater measure, and the nature of Poetry remains forever hidden from them in deepest concealment. On all hands, there is no truce given to the hypothesis, that the ultimate object of the poet is to please. Sensation, even of the finest and most rapturous sort, is not the end, but the means. Art is to be loved, not because of its effects, but because of itself; not because it is useful for spiritual pleasure, or even for moral culture, but because it is Art, and the highest in man, and the soul of all Beauty. To inquire after its *utility*, would be like inquiring after the *utility* of a God, or, what to the Germans would sound stranger than it does to us, the *utility* of Virtue and Religion. — On these particulars, the authenticity of which we might verify, not so much by citation of individual passages, as by reference to the scope and spirit of whole treatises, we must for the present leave our readers to their own reflections. Might we advise them, it would be to inquire farther, and, if possible, to see the matter with their own eyes.

Meanwhile, that all this must tend, among the Germans, to raise the general standard of Art, and of what an Artist ought to be in his own esteem and that of others, will be readily inferred. The character of a Poet does, accordingly, stand higher with the Germans than with most nations. That he is a man of integrity as a man; of zeal and honest diligence in his art, and of true manly feeling towards all men, is of course presupposed. Of persons that are not so, but employ their gift, in rhyme or otherwise, for brutish or malignant purposes, it is understood that such lie without the limits of Criticism, being subjects not for the judge of Art, but for the judge of Police. But even with regard to the fair tradesman, who offers his talent in open market, to do work of a harmless and acceptable sort for hire, — with regard to this person also, their opinion is very low. The "Bread-artist," as they call him, can gain no reverence for himself from these men. "Unhappy mortal," says the mild but lofty-minded Schiller, "Unhappy mortal, that, with Science and Art, the noblest of all instruments, effectest and attemptest nothing more than the day-drudge with the meanest; that, in the domain of perfect Freedom, bearest about in thee the spirit of a Slave!" Nay, to the genuine Poet they deny even the privilege of regarding what so many cherish, under the title of their "fame," as the best and highest of all. Hear Schiller again: —

"The Artist, it is true, is the son of his age; but pity for him if he is its pupil, or even its favorite! Let some beneficent divinity snatch him, when a suckling, from the breast of his mother, and nurse him with the milk of a better time, that he may ripen to his full stature beneath a distant Grecian sky. And having grown to manhood, let him return, a foreign shape, into his century; not, however, to delight it by his presence, but dreadful, like the Son of Agamemnon, to purify it. The matter of his works he will take from the present, but their form he will derive from a nobler time; nay from beyond all time, from the absolute unchanging unity of his own nature. Here, from the pure ether of his spiritual essence, flows down the Fountain of Beauty, uncontaminated by the pollutions of ages and generations, which roll to and fro in their turbid vortex far beneath it. His matter Caprice can dishonor, as she has ennobled it; but the chaste form is withdrawn from her mutations. The Roman of the first century had long bent the knee before his Cæsars, when the statues of Rome were still standing erect; the temples continued holy to the eye, when their gods had long been a laughing-stock; and the abominations of a Nero and a Commodus were silently rebuked by the style of the edifice, which lent them its concealment. Man has lost his dignity, but Art has saved it, and preserved it for him in expressive marbles. Truth still lives in fiction, and from the copy the original will be restored.

"But how is the Artist to guard himself from the corruptions of his time, which on every side assail him? By despising its decisions. Let him look upwards to his dignity and the law, not downwards to his happiness and his wants. Free alike from the vain activity that longs to impress its traces on the fleeting instant, and from the querulous spirit of enthusiasm that measures by the scale of perfection the meagre product of reality, let him leave to mere Understanding, which is here at home, the province of the actual; while *he* strives, by uniting the possible with the necessary, to produce the ideal. This let him imprint and express in fiction and truth; imprint it in the sport of his imagination and the earnest of his actions; imprint it in all sensible and spiritual forms, and cast it silently into everlasting time."[1]

Still higher are Fichte's notions on this subject; or rather, expressed in higher terms, for the central principle is the same both in the philosopher and the poet. According to Fichte, there is a "Divine Idea" pervading the visible Universe; which visible Universe is indeed but its symbol and sensible manifestation, having in itself no meaning, or even true existence independent of it. To the mass of men this Divine Idea of the world lies hidden: yet to discern it, to seize it, and live wholly in it, is the condition of all genuine virtue, knowledge, freedom; and the end, therefore, of all spiritual effort in every age. Literary Men are the appointed interpreters of this Divine Idea; a perpetual priesthood, we might say, standing forth, generation after generation, as the dispensers and living types of God's everlasting wisdom, to show it in their writings and actions, in such particular form as their own particular times require it in. For each age, by the law of its nature, is different from every other age, and demands a different representation of the Divine Idea, the essence of which is the same in all; so that the literary man of one century is only by mediation and reinterpretation applicable to the wants of another. But in every century, every man who labors, be it in what province he may, to teach others, must first have possessed himself of the Divine Idea, or, at least, be with his whole heart and his whole soul striving after it. If, without possessing it or striving after it, he abide diligently by some material practical department of knowledge, he may indeed still be (says Fichte, in his rugged way) a "useful hodman;" but should he attempt to deal with the Whole, and to become an architect, he is, in strictness of language, "Nothing;" — "he is an ambiguous mongrel between the possessor of the Idea, and the man who feels himself solidly supported and carried on by the common Reality of things: in his fruitless endeavor after the Idea, he has neglected to acquire the craft of taking part in this Reality; and so hovers between two worlds, without pertaining to either." Elsewhere he adds: —

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[1] *Über die Aesthetische Erziehung des Menschen,* — On the Æsthetic Education of Man.

"There is still, from another point of view, another division in our notion of the Literary Man, and one to us of immediate application. Namely, either the Literary Man has already laid hold of the whole Divine Idea, in so far as it can be comprehended by man, or perhaps of a special portion of this its comprehensible part, — which truly is not possible without at least a clear oversight of the whole; — he has already laid hold of it, penetrated, and made it entirely clear to himself, so that it has become a possession recallable at all times in the same shape to his view, and a component part of his personality: in that case he is a completed and equipt Literary Man, a man who *has* studied. Or else, he is still struggling and striving to make the Idea in general, or that particular portion and point of it, from which onwards he for his part means to penetrate the whole, entirely clear to himself; detached sparkles of light already spring forth on him from all sides, and disclose a higher world before him; but they do not yet unite themselves into an indivisible whole; they vanish from his view as capriciously as they came; he cannot yet bring them under obedience to his freedom: in that case he is a progressing and self-unfolding literary man, a Student. That it be actually the Idea, which is possessed or striven after, is common to both. Should the striving aim merely at the outward form, and the letter of learned culture, there is then produced, when the circle is gone round, the completed, when it is not yet gone round, the progressing, Bungler (*Stümper*). The latter is more tolerable than the former; for there is still room to hope that, in continuing his travel, he may at some future point be seized by the Idea; but of the first all hope is over."[1]

From this bold and lofty principle the duties of the Literary Man are deduced with scientific precision; and stated, in all their sacredness and grandeur, with an austere brevity more impressive than any rhetoric. Fichte's metaphysical theory may be called in question, and readily enough misapprehended; but the sublime stoicism of his sentiments will find some response in many a heart. We must add the conclusion of his first Discourse, as a farther illustration of his manner: —

"In disquisitions of the sort like ours of to-day, which all the rest too must resemble, the generality are wont to censure: First, their severity; very often on the good-natured supposition that the speaker is not aware how much his rigor must displease us; that we have but frankly to let him know this, and then doubtless he will reconsider himself, and soften his statements. Thus, we said above that a man who, after literary culture, had not arrived at knowledge of the Divine Idea, or did not strive towards it, was in strict speech Nothing; and farther down, we said that he was a Bungler. This is in the style of those unmerciful expressions by which philosophers give such offence. — Now, looking away from the present case, that we may front the maxim in its general shape, I remind you that this species of character, without decisive force to renounce all respect for Truth, seeks merely to bargain and cheapen something out of her, whereby he himself on easier terms may attain to some consideration. But Truth, which once for all is as she is, and cannot alter aught of her nature, goes on her way; and there remains for her, in regard to those who desire her not simply because she is true, nothing else but to leave them standing as if they had never addressed her.

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[1] *Über das Wesen des Gelehrten* (On the Nature of the Literary Man); a Course of Lectures delivered at Erlangen in 1805.

"Then farther, discourses of this sort are wont to be censured as unintelligible. Thus I figure to myself, — nowise you, Gentlemen, but some completed Literary Man of the second species, whose eye the disquisition here entered upon chanced to meet, as coming forward, doubting this way and that, and at last reflectively exclaiming: 'The Idea, the Divine Idea, that which lies at the bottom of Appearance: what, pray, may *this* mean?' Of such a questioner I would inquire in turn: 'What, pray, may this question mean?' — Investigate it strictly, it means in most cases nothing more than: 'Under what other names, and in what other formulas, do I already know this same thing, which thou expressest by so strange and to me so unknown a symbol?' And to this again in most cases the only suitable reply were: 'Thou knowest this thing not at all, neither under this nor under any other name; and wouldst thou arrive at the knowledge of it, thou must even now begin at the beginning to make study thereof; — and then, most fitly, under that name by which it is here first presented to thee!'"

With such a notion of the Artist, it were a strange inconsistency did Criticism show itself unscientific or lax in estimating the product of his Art. For light on this point, we might refer to the writings of almost any individual among the German critics: take, for instance, the *Charakteristiken* of the two Schlegels, a work too of their younger years; and say whether in depth, clearness, minute and patient fidelity, these *Characters* have often been surpassed, or the import and poetic worth of so many poets and poems more vividly and accurately brought to view. As an instance of a much higher kind, we might refer to Goethe's criticism of *Hamlet* in his *Wilhelm Meister*. This truly is what may be called the poetry of criticism: for it is in some sort also a creative art; aiming, at least, to reproduce under a different shape the existing product of the poet; painting to the intellect what already lay painted to the heart and the imagination. Nor is it over poetry alone that Criticism watches with such loving strictness: the mimic, the pictorial, the musical arts, all modes of representing or addressing the highest nature of man are acknowledged as younger sisters of Poetry, and fostered with like care. Winkelmann's *History of Plastic Art* is known by repute to all readers: and of those who know it by inspection, many may have wondered why such a work has not been added to our own literature, to instruct our own sculptors and painters. On this subject of the plastic arts, we cannot withhold the following little sketch of Goethe's, as a specimen of pictorial criticism in what we consider a superior style. It is of an imaginary Landscape-painter, and his views of Swiss scenery; it will bear to be studied minutely, for there is no word without its meaning: —

"He succeeds in representing the cheerful repose of lake prospects, where houses in friendly approximation, imaging themselves in the clear wave, seem as if bathing in its depths; shores encircled with green hills, behind which rise forest mountains, and icy peaks of glaciers. The tone of coloring in such scenes is gay, mirthfully clear; the distances as if overflowed with softening vapor, which from watered hollows and river-valleys mounts up grayer and mistier, and indicates their windings. No less is the master's art to be praised in views from valleys lying nearer the high Alpine ranges, where declivities slope down, luxuriantly overgrown, and fresh streams roll rapidly along by the foot of rocks.

"With exquisite skill, in the deep shady trees of the foreground, he gives the distinctive character of the several species; satisfying us in the form of the whole, as in the structure of the branches, and the details of the leaves; no less so, in the fresh green with its manifold shadings, where soft airs appear as if fanning us with benignant breath, and the lights as if thereby put in motion.

"In the middle-ground, his lively green tone grows fainter by degrees; and at last, on the more distant mountain-tops, passing into weak violet, weds itself with the blue of the sky. But our artist is above all happy in his paintings of high Alpine regions; in seizing the simple greatness and stillness of their character; the wide pastures on the slopes, where dark solitary firs stand forth from the grassy carpet; and from high cliffs foaming brooks rush down. Whether he relieve his pasturages with grazing cattle, or the narrow winding rocky path with mules and laden pack-horses, he paints all with equal truth and richness; still introduced in the proper place, and not in too great copiousness, they decorate and enliven these scenes, without interrupting, without lessening their peaceful solitude. The execution testifies a master's hand; easy, with a few sure strokes, and yet complete. In his later pieces, he employed glittering English permanent-colors on paper: these pictures, accordingly, are of pre-eminently blooming tone; cheerful, yet, at the same time, strong and full.

"His views of deep mountain-chasms, where, round and round, nothing fronts us but dead rock, where, in the abyss, overspanned by its bold arch, the wild stream rages, are, indeed, of less attraction than the former: yet their truth excites us; we admire the great effect of the whole, produced, at so little cost, by a few expressive strokes, and masses of local colors.

"With no less accuracy of character can he represent the regions of the topmost Alpine ranges, where neither tree nor shrub any more appears; but only, amid the rocky teeth and snow-summits, a few sunny spots clothe themselves with a soft sward. Beautiful, and balmy and inviting as he colors these spots, he has here wisely forborne to introduce grazing herds; for these regions give food only to the chamois, and a perilous employment to the wild-hay-men."[1]

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[1] The poor wild-hay-man of the Rigiberg,
Whose trade is, on the brow of the abyss,
To mow the common grass from nooks and shelves
To which the cattle dare not climb.
Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell.*

We have extracted this passage from *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*, Goethe's last Novel. The perusal of his whole Works would show, among many other more important facts, that Criticism also is a science of which he is master; that if ever any man had studied Art in all its branches and bearings, from its origin in the depths of the creative spirit, to its minutest finish on the canvas of the painter, on the lips of the poet, or under the finger of the musician, he was that man. A nation which appreciates such studies, nay requires and rewards them, cannot, wherever its defects may lie, be defective in judgment of the Arts.

But a weightier question still remains. What has been the fruit of this its high and just judgment on these matters? What has criticism profited it, to the bringing forth of good works? How do its poems and its poets correspond with so lofty a standard? We answer, that on this point also, Germany may rather court investigation than fear it. There are poets in that country who belong to a nobler class than most nations have to show in these days; a class entirely unknown to some nations; and, for the last two centuries, rare in all. We have no hesitation in stating that we see in certain of the best German poets, and those too of our own time, something which associates them, remotely or nearly we say not, but which does associate them with the Masters of Art, the Saints of Poetry, long since departed, and, as we thought, without successors, from the earth, but canonized in the hearts of all generations, and yet living to all by the memory of what they did and were. Glances we do seem to find of that ethereal glory which looks on us in its full brightness from the *Transfiguration* of Raffaelle, from the *Tempest* of Shakspeare; and, in broken but purest and still heart-piercing beams, struggling through the gloom of long ages, from the tragedies of Sophocles, and the weather-worn sculptures of the Parthenon. This is that heavenly spirit which, best seen in the aerial embodiment of poetry, but spreading likewise over all the thoughts and actions of an age, has given us Surreys, Sydneys, Raleighs in court and camp, Cecils in policy, Hookers in divinity, Bacons in philosophy, and Shakspeares and Spensers in song. All hearts that know this, know it to be the highest; and that, in poetry or elsewhere, it alone is true and imperishable. In affirming that any vestige, however feeble, of this divine spirit, is discernible in German poetry, we are aware that we place it above the existing poetry of any other nation.

To prove this bold assertion, logical arguments were at all times unavailing; and, in the present circumstances of the case, more than usually so. Neither will any extract or specimen help us; for it is not in parts, but in whole poems, that the spirit of a true poet is to be seen. We can, therefore, only name such men as Tieck, Richter, Herder, Schiller, and, above all, Goethe; and ask any reader who has learned to admire wisely our own literature of Queen Elizabeth's age, to peruse these writers also; to study them till he feels that he has understood them, and justly estimated both their light and darkness; and then to pronounce whether it is not, in some degree, as we have said. Are there not tones here of that old melody? Are there not glimpses of that serene soul, that calm harmonious strength, that smiling earnestness, that Love and Faith and Humanity of nature? Do these foreign contemporaries of ours still exhibit, in their characters as men, something of that sterling nobleness, that union of majesty with meekness, which we must ever venerate in those our spiritual fathers? And do their works, in the new form of this century, show forth that old nobleness, not consistent only, with the science, the precision, the scepticism of these days, but wedded to them, incorporated with them, and shining through them like their life and soul? Might it in truth almost seem to us, in reading the prose of Goethe, as if we were reading that of Milton; and of Milton writing with the culture of this time; combining French clearness with old English depth? And of his poetry may it indeed be said that it *is* poetry, and yet the poetry of our own generation; an ideal world, and yet the world we even now live in? — These questions we must leave candid and studious inquirers to answer for themselves; premising only that the secret is not to be found on the surface; that the first reply is likely to be in the negative, but with inquirers of this sort by no means likely to be the final one.

To ourselves, we confess, it has long so appeared. The poetry of Goethe, for instance, we reckon to be Poetry, sometimes in the very highest sense of that word; yet it is no reminiscence, but something actually present and before us; no looking back into an antique Fairyland, divided by impassable abysses from the real world as it lies about us and within us; but a looking round upon that real world itself, now rendered holier to our eyes, and once more become a solemn temple, where the spirit of Beauty still dwells, and is still, under new emblems, to be worshipped as of old. With Goethe, the mythologies of bygone days pass only for what they are: we have no witchcraft or magic in the common acceptation; and spirits no longer bring with them airs from heaven or blasts from hell; for Pandemonium and the steadfast Empyrean have faded away, since the opinions which they symbolized no longer are. Neither does he bring his heroes from remote Oriental climates, or periods of Chivalry, or any section either of Atlantis or the Age of Gold; feeling that the reflex of these things is cold and faint, and only hangs like a cloud-picture in the distance, beautiful but delusive, and which even the simplest know to be a delusion. The end of Poetry is higher: she must dwell in Reality, and become manifest to men in the forms among which they live and move. And this is what we prize in Goethe, and more or less in Schiller and the rest; all of whom, each in his own way, are writers of a similar aim. The coldest sceptic, the most callous worldling, sees not the actual aspects of life more sharply than they are here delineated: the Nineteenth Century stands before us, in all its contradiction and perplexity; barren, mean and baleful, as we have all known it; yet here no longer mean or barren, but enamelled into beauty in the poet's spirit; for its secret significance is laid open, and thus, as it were, the life-giving fire that slumbers in it is called forth, and flowers and foliage, as of old, are springing on its bleakest wildernesses, and overmantling its sternest cliffs. For these men have not only the clear eye, but the loving heart. They have penetrated into the mystery of Nature; after long trial they have been initiated; and to unwearied endeavor, Art has at last yielded her secret; and thus can the Spirit of our Age, embodied in fair imaginations, look forth on us, earnest and full of meaning, from their works. As the first and indispensable condition of good poets, they are wise and good men: much they have seen and suffered, and they have conquered all this, and made it all their own; they have known life in its heights and depths, and mastered it in both, and can teach others what it is, and how to lead it rightly. Their minds are as a mirror to us, where the perplexed image of our own being is reflected back in soft and clear interpretation. Here mirth and gravity are blended together; wit rests on deep devout wisdom, as the greensward with its flowers must rest on the rock, whose foundations reach downward to the centre. In a word, they are believers; but their faith is no sallow plant of darkness; it is green and flowery, for it grows in the sunlight. And this faith is the doctrine they have to teach us, the sense which, under every noble and graceful form, it is their endeavor to set forth: —

> "As all Nature's thousand changes
> But one changeless God proclaim,
> So in Art's wide kingdoms ranges
> One sole meaning, still the same:
> This is Truth, eternal Reason,
> Which from Beauty takes its dress,
> And, serene through time and season,
> Stands for aye in loveliness."

Such indeed is the end of Poetry at all times; yet in no recent literature known to us, except the German, has it been so far attained; nay, perhaps, so much as consciously and steadfastly attempted.

The reader feels that if this our opinion be in any measure true, it is a truth of no ordinary moment. It concerns not this writer or that; but it opens to us new views on the fortune of spiritual culture with ourselves and all nations. Have we not heard gifted men complaining that Poetry had passed away without return; that creative imagination consorted not with vigor of intellect, and that in the cold light of science there was no longer room for faith in things unseen? The old simplicity of heart was gone; earnest emotions must no longer be expressed in earnest symbols; beauty must recede into elegance, devoutness of character be replaced by clearness of thought, and grave wisdom by shrewdness and *persiflage.* Such things we have heard, but hesitated to believe them. If the poetry of the Germans, and this not by theory but by example, have proved, or even begun to prove, the contrary, it will deserve far higher encomiums than any we have passed upon it.

In fact, the past and present aspect of German literature illustrates the literature of England in more than one way. Its history keeps pace with that of ours; for so closely are all European communities connected, that the phases of mind in any one country, so far as these represent its general circumstances and intellectual position, are but modified repetitions of its phases in every other. We hinted above that the Saxon School corresponded with what might be called the Scotch: Cramer was not unlike our Blair; Von Cronegk might be compared with Michael Bruce; and Rabener and Gellert with Beattie and Logan. To this mild and cultivated period, there succeeded, as with us, a partial abandonment of poetry, in favor of political and philosophical Illumination. Then was the time when hot war was declared against Prejudice of all sorts; Utility was set up for the universal measure of mental as well as material value; poetry, except of an economical and preceptorial character, was found to be the product of a rude age; and religious enthusiasm was but derangement in the biliary organs. Then did the Prices and Condorcets of Germany indulge in day-dreams of perfectibility; a new social order was to bring back the Saturnian era to the world; and philosophers sat on their sunny Pisgah, looking back over dark savage deserts, and forward into a land flowing with milk and honey.

This period also passed away, with its good and its evil; of which chiefly the latter seems to be remembered; for we scarcely ever find the affair alluded to, except in terms of contempt, by the title *Aufklärerei* (Illuminationism); and its partisans, in subsequent satirical controversies, received the nickname of *Philistern* (Philistines), which the few scattered remnants of them still bear, both in writing and speech. Poetry arose again, and in a new and singular shape. The *Sorrows of Werter*, *Götz von Berlichingen*, and the *Robbers*, may stand as patriarchs and representatives of three separate classes, which, commingled in various proportions, or separately coexisting, now with the preponderance of this, now of that, occupied the whole popular literature of Germany till near the end of the last century. These were the Sentimentalists, the Chivalry-play writers, and other gorgeous and outrageous persons; as a whole, now pleasantly denominated the *Kraftmänner*, literally, Power-men. They dealt in sceptical lamentation, mysterious enthusiasm, frenzy and suicide: they recurred with fondness to the Feudal Ages, delineating many a battlemented keep, and swart buff-belted man-at-arms; for in reflection, as in action, they studied to be strong, vehement, rapidly effective; of battle-tumult, love-madness, heroism and despair, there was no end. This literary period is called the *Sturm- und Drang-Zeit*, the Storm- and Stress-Period; for great indeed was the woe and fury of these Power-men. Beauty, to their mind, seemed synonymous with Strength. All passion was poetical, so it were but fierce enough. Their head moral virtue was pride; their *beau idéal* of manhood was some transcript of Milton's Devil. Often they inverted Bolingbroke's plan, and instead of "patronizing Providence," did directly the opposite; raging with extreme animation against Fate in general, because it enthralled free virtue; and with clenched hands, or sounding shields, hurling defiance towards the vault of heaven.

These Power-men are gone too; and, with few exceptions, save the three originals above named, their works have already followed them. The application of all this to our own literature is too obvious to require much exposition. Have not we also had our Power-men? And will not, as in Germany, to us likewise a milder, a clearer, and a truer time come round? Our Byron was in his youth but what Schiller and Goethe had been in theirs: yet the author of *Werter* wrote *Iphigenie* and

Torquato Tasso; and he who began with the *Robbers* ended with *Wilhelm Tell.* With longer life, all things were to have been hoped for from Byron: for he loved truth in his inmost heart, and would have discovered at last that his Corsairs and Harolds were not true. It was otherwise appointed. But with one man all hope does not die. If this way is the right one, we too shall find it. The poetry of Germany, meanwhile, we cannot but regard as well deserving to be studied, in this as in other points of view: it is distinctly an advance beyond any other known to us; whether on the right path or not, may be still uncertain; but a path selected by Schillers and Goethes, and vindicated by Schlegels and Tiecks, is surely worth serious examination. For the rest, need we add that it is study for self-instruction, nowise for purposes of imitation, that we recommend? Among the deadliest of poetical sins is imitation; for if every man must have his own way of thought, and his own way of expressing it, much more every nation. But of danger on that side, in the country of Shakspeare and Milton, there seems little to be feared.

We come now to the second grand objection against German literature, its *Mysticism.* In treating of a subject itself so vague and dim, it were well if we tried, in the first place, to settle, with more accuracy, what each of the two contending parties really means to say or to contradict regarding it. Mysticism is a word in the mouths of all: yet, of the hundred, perhaps not one has ever asked himself what this opprobrious epithet properly signified in his mind; or where the boundary between true science and this Land of Chimeras was to be laid down. Examined strictly, *mystical,* in most cases, will turn out to be merely synonymous with *not understood.* Yet surely there may be haste and oversight here; for it is well known, that, to the understanding of anything, *two* conditions are equally required; *intelligibility* in the thing itself being no whit more indispensable than *intelligence* in the examiner of it. "I am bound to find you in reasons, Sir," said Johnson, "but not in brains;" a speech of the most shocking unpoliteness, yet truly enough expressing the state of the case.

It may throw some light on this question, if we remind our readers of the following fact. In the field of human investigation there are objects of two sorts; First, the *visible*, including not only such as are material, and may be seen by the bodily eye; but all such, likewise, as may be represented in a *shape*, before the mind's eye, or in any way pictured there: And, secondly, the *invisible*, or such as are not only unseen by human eyes, but as cannot be seen by any eye; not objects of sense at all; not capable, in short, of being *pictured* or imaged in the mind, or in any way represented by a *shape* either without the mind or within it. If any man shall here turn upon us, and assert that there are no such invisible objects; that whatever cannot be so pictured or imagined (meaning *imaged*) is nothing, and the science that relates to it nothing; we shall regret the circumstance. We shall request him, however, to consider seriously and deeply within himself, what he means simply by these two words, God and his own Soul; and whether he finds that visible shape and true existence are here also one and the same? If he still persist in denial, we have nothing for it, but to wish him good speed on his own separate path of inquiry; and he and we will agree to differ on this subject of mysticism, as on so many more important ones.

Now, whoever has a material and visible object to treat, be it of Natural Science, Political Philosophy, or any such externally and sensibly existing department, may represent it to his own mind, and convey it to the minds of others, as it were, by a direct diagram, more complex indeed than a geometrical diagram, but still with the same sort of precision; and, provided his diagram be *complete*, and the *same* both to himself and his reader, he may reason of it, and discuss it, with the clearness, and, in some sort, the certainty of geometry itself. If he do not so reason of it, this must be for want of comprehension to image out the *whole* of it, or of distinctness to convey the *same* whole to his reader: the diagrams of the two are different; the conclusions of the one diverge from those of the other, and the obscurity here, provided the reader be a man of sound judgment and due attentiveness, results from incapacity on the part of the writer. In such a case, the latter is justly regarded as a man of imperfect intellect; he grasps more than he can carry; he confuses what, with ordinary faculty, might be rendered clear; he is not a mystic, but, what is much worse, a dunce. Another matter it is, however, when the object to be treated of belongs to the invisible and immaterial class; cannot be pictured out even by the writer himself, much less, in ordinary symbols, set before the reader. In this case, it is evident, the difficulties of comprehension are increased an hundred-fold. Here it will require long, patient and skilful effort, both from the writer and the reader, before the two can so much as speak together; before the former can make known to the latter, not *how* the matter stands, but even *what* the matter *is*, which they have to investigate in concert. He must devise new means of explanation, describe conditions of mind in which this invisible idea arises, the false persuasions that eclipse it, the false shows that may be mistaken for it, the glimpses of it that appear elsewhere; in short, strive, by a thousand well-devised methods, to guide his reader up to the perception of it; in all which, moreover, the reader must faithfully and toilsomely co-operate with him, if any fruit is to come of their mutual endeavor. Should the latter take up his ground too early, and affirm to himself that now he has seized what he still has not seized; that this and nothing else is the thing aimed at by his teacher, the consequences are plain enough: disunion, darkness and contradiction between the two; the writer has written for another man, and this reader, after long provocation, quarrels with him finally, and quits him as a *mystic*.

Nevertheless, after all these limitations, we shall not hesitate to admit, that there is in the German mind a tendency to mysticism, properly so called; as perhaps there is, unless carefully guarded against, in all minds tempered like theirs. It is a fault; but one hardly separable from the excellences we admire most in them. A simple, tender and devout nature, seized by some touch of divine Truth, and of this perhaps under some rude enough symbol, is rapt with it into a whirlwind of unutterable thoughts; wild gleams of splendor dart to and fro in the eye of the seer, but the vision will not abide with him, and yet he feels that its light is light from heaven, and precious to him beyond all price. A simple nature, a George Fox or a Jacob Böhme, ignorant of all the ways of men, of the dialect in which they speak, or the forms by which they think, is laboring with a poetic, a religious idea, which, like all such ideas, must express itself by word and act, or consume the heart it dwells in. Yet how shall he speak; how shall he pour forth into other souls that of which his own soul is full even to bursting? He cannot speak to us; he knows not *our* state, and cannot make known to us his own. His words are an inexplicable rhapsody, a speech in an unknown tongue. Whether there is meaning in it to the speaker himself, and how much or how true, we shall never ascertain; for it is not in the language of men, but of one man who had not learned the language of men; and, with himself, the key to its full interpretation was lost from amongst us. These are mystics; men who either know not clearly their own meaning, or at least cannot put it forth in formulas of thought, whereby others, with whatever difficulty, may apprehend it. Was their meaning clear to themselves, gleams of it will yet shine through, how ignorantly and unconsciously soever it may have been delivered; was it still wavering and obscure, no science could have delivered it wisely. In either case, much more in the last, they merit and obtain the name of mystics. To scoffers they are a ready and cheap prey; but sober persons understand that pure evil is as unknown in this lower Universe as pure good; and that even in mystics, of an honest and deep-feeling heart, there may be much to reverence, and of the rest more to pity than to mock.

But it is not to apologize for Böhme, or Novalis, or the school of Theosophus and Flood, that we have here undertaken. Neither is it on such persons that the charge of mysticism brought against the Germans mainly rests. Böhme is little known among us; Novalis, much as he deserves knowing, not at all; nor is it understood, that, in their own country, these men rank higher than they do, or might do, with ourselves. The chief mystics in Germany, it would appear, are the Transcendental Philosophers, Kant, Fichte, and

Schelling! With these is the chosen seat of mysticism, these are its "tenebrific constellation," from which it "doth ray out darkness" over the earth. Among a certain class of thinkers, does a frantic exaggeration in sentiment, a crude fever-dream in opinion, anywhere break forth, it is directly labelled as Kantism; and the moon-struck speculator is, for the time, silenced and put to shame by this epithet. For often, in such circles, Kant's Philosophy is not only an absurdity, but a wickedness and a horror; the pious and peaceful sage of Königsberg passes for a sort of Necromancer and Black-artist in Metaphysics; his doctrine is a region of boundless baleful gloom, too cunningly broken here and there by splendors of unholy fire; spectres and tempting demons people it, and, hovering over fathomless abysses, hang gay and gorgeous air-castles, into which the hapless traveller is seduced to enter, and so sinks to rise no more.

If anything in the history of Philosophy could surprise us, it might well be this. Perhaps among all the metaphysical writers of the eighteenth century, including Hume and Hartley themselves, there is not one that so ill meets the conditions of a mystic as this same Immanuel Kant. A quiet, vigilant, clear-sighted man, who had become distinguished to the world in mathematics before he attempted philosophy; who in his writings generally, on this and other subjects, is perhaps characterized by no quality so much as precisely by the distinctness of his conceptions, and the sequence and iron strictness with which he reasons. To our own minds, in the little that we know of him, he has more than once recalled Father Boscovich in Natural Philosophy; so piercing, yet so sure; so concise, so still, so simple; with such clearness and composure does he mould the complicacy of his subject; and so firm, sharp and definite are the results he evolves from it.[1] Right or wrong as his hypothesis may be, no one that knows him will suspect that he himself had not seen it, and seen over it;

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[1] We have heard that the Latin Translation of his Works is unintelligible, the Translator himself not having understood it; also that Villers is no safe guide in the study of him. Neither Villers nor those Latin Works are known to us.

had not meditated it with calmness and deep thought, and studied throughout to expound it with scientific rigor. Neither, as we often hear, is there any superhuman faculty required to follow him. We venture to assure such of our readers as are in any measure used to metaphysical study, that the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* is by no means the hardest task they have tried. It is true, there is an unknown and forbidding terminology to be mastered; but is not this the case also with Chemistry, and Astronomy, and all other Sciences that deserve the name of science? It is true, a careless or unprepared reader will find Kant's writing a riddle; but will a reader of this sort make much of Newton's *Principia,* or D'Alembert's *Calculus of Variations?* He will make nothing of them; perhaps less than nothing; for if he trust to his own judgment, he will pronounce them madness. Yet if the Philosophy of Mind is any philosophy at all, Physics and Mathematics must be plain subjects compared with it. But these latter are happy, not only in the fixedness and simplicity of their methods, but also in the universal acknowledgment of their claim to that prior and continual intensity of application, without which all progress in any science is impossible; though more than one may be attempted without it; and blamed, because without it they will yield no result.

The truth is, German Philosophy differs not more widely from ours in the substance of its doctrines than in its manner of communicating them. The class of disquisitions named *Kamin-Philosophie* (Parlor-fire Philosophy) in Germany, is held in little estimation there. No right treatise on anything, it is believed, least of all on the nature of the human mind, can be profitably read, unless the reader himself cooperates: the blessing of half-sleep in such cases is denied him; he must be alert, and strain every faculty, or it profits nothing. Philosophy, with these men, pretends to be a Science, nay the living principle and soul of all Sciences, and must be treated and studied scientifically, or not studied and treated at all. Its doctrines should be present with every cultivated writer; its spirit should pervade every piece of composition, how slight or popular soever: but to treat itself popularly would be a degradation and an impossibility. Philosophy dwells aloft in the Temple of Science, the divinity of its inmost shrine; her dictates descend among men, but she herself descends not; whoso would behold her, must climb with long and laborious effort; nay still linger in the forecourt, till manifold trial have proved him worthy of admission into the interior solemnities.

It is the false notion prevalent respecting the objects aimed at, and the purposed manner of attaining them, in German Philosophy, that causes, in great part, this disappointment of our attempts to study it, and the evil report which the disappointed naturally enough bring back with them. Let the reader believe us, the Critical Philosophers, whatever they may be, are no mystics, and have no fellowship with mystics. What a mystic is, we have said above. But Kant, Fichte, and Schelling are men of cool judgment, and determinate energetic character; men of science and profound and universal investigation; nowhere does the world, in all its bearings, spiritual or material, theoretic or practical, lie pictured in clearer or truer colors than in such heads as these. We have heard Kant estimated as a spiritual brother of Böhme: as justly might we take Sir Isaac Newton for a spiritual brother of Baron Swedenborg, and Laplace's *Mechanism of the Heavens* for a peristyle to the *Vision of the New Jerusalem.* That this is no extravagant comparison, we appeal to any man acquainted with any single volume of Kant's writings. Neither, though Schelling's system differs still more widely from ours, can we reckon Schelling a mystic. He is a man evidently of deep insight into individual things; speaks wisely, and reasons with the nicest accuracy, on all matters where we understand his data. Fairer might it be in us to say that we had not yet appreciated his truth, and *therefore* could not appreciate his error. But above all, the mysticism of Fichte might astonish us. The cold, colossal, adamantine spirit, standing erect and clear, like a Cato Major among degenerate men; fit to have been the teacher of the Stoa, and to have discoursed of Beauty and Virtue in the groves of Academe! Our reader has seen some words of Fichte's: are these like words of a mystic? We state Fichte's character, as it is known and admitted by men of all parties among the Germans, when we say that so robust an intellect, a soul so calm, so lofty, massive and immovable, has not mingled in philosophical discussion since the time of Luther. We figure his motionless look, had he heard this charge of mysticism! For the man rises before us, amid contradiction and debate, like a granite mountain amid clouds and wind. Ridicule, of the best that could be commanded, has been already tried against him; but it could not avail. What was the wit of a thousand wits to him? The cry of a thousand choughs assaulting that old cliff of granite: seen from the summit, these, as they winged the midway air, showed scarce so gross as beetles, and their cry was seldom even audible. Fichte's opinions may be true or false; but his character, as a thinker, can be slightly valued only by such as know it ill; and as a man, approved by action and suffering, in his life and in his death, he ranks with a class of men who were common only in better ages than ours.

The Critical Philosophy has been regarded by persons of approved judgment, and nowise directly implicated in the furthering of it, as distinctly the greatest intellectual achievement of the century in which it came to light. August Wilhelm Schlegel has stated in plain terms his belief, that in respect of its probable influence on the moral culture of Europe, it stands on a line with the Reformation. We mention Schlegel as a man whose opinion has a known value among ourselves. But the worth of Kant's philosophy is not to be gathered from votes alone. The noble system of morality, the purer theology, the lofty views of man's nature derived from it, nay perhaps the very discussion of such matters, to which it gave so strong an impetus, have told with remarkable and beneficial influence on the whole spiritual character of Germany. No writer of any importance in that country, be he acquainted or not with the Critical Philosophy, but breathes a spirit of devoutness and elevation more or less directly drawn from it. Such men as Goethe and Schiller cannot exist without effect in any literature or in any century: but if one circumstance more than another has contributed to forward their endeavors, and introduce that higher tone into the literature of Germany, it has been this philosophical system; to which, in wisely believing its results, or even in wisely denying them, all that was lofty and pure in the genius of poetry, or the reason of man, so readily allied itself.

That such a system must, in the end, become known among ourselves, as it is already becoming known in France and Italy, and over all Europe, no one acquainted in any measure with the character of this matter, and the character of England, will hesitate to predict. Doubtless it will be studied here, and by heads adequate to do it justice; it will be investigated duly and thoroughly; and settled in our minds on the footing which belongs to it, and where thenceforth it must continue. Respecting the degrees of truth and error which will then be found to exist in Kant's system, or in the modifications it has since received, and is still receiving, we desire to be understood as making no estimate, and little qualified to make any. We would have it studied and known, on general grounds; because even the errors of such men are instructive; and because, without a large admixture of truth, no error *can* exist under such combinations, and become diffused so widely. To judge of it we pretend not: we are still inquirers in the mere outskirts of the matter; and it is but inquiry that we wish to see promoted.

Meanwhile, as an advance or first step towards this, we may state something of what has most struck ourselves as characterizing Kant's system; as distinguishing it from every other known to us; and chiefly from the Metaphysical Philosophy which is taught in Britain, or rather which *was* taught; for, on looking round, we see not that there is any such Philosophy in existence at the present day.[1] The Kantist, in direct contradiction to Locke and all his followers, both of the French and English or Scotch school, commences from within, and proceeds outwards ; instead of commencing from without, and, with various precautions and hesitations, endeavoring to proceed inwards. The ultimate aim of all Philosophy must be to interpret appearances, — from the given symbol to ascertain the thing. Now the first step towards this, the aim of what may be called Primary or Critical Philosophy, must be to find some indubitable principle ; to fix ourselves on some unchangeable basis; to discover what the Germans call the *Urwahr*, the Primitive Truth, the necessarily, absolutely and eternally *True*. This necessarily True, this absolute basis of Truth, Locke silently, and Reid and his followers with more tumult, find in a certain modified Experience, and evidence of Sense, in the universal and natural persuasion of all men. Not so the Germans : they deny that there is here any absolute Truth, or that any Philosophy whatever can be built on such a basis ; nay they go to the length of asserting, that such an appeal even to the universal persuasions of mankind, gather them with what precautions you may, amounts to a total abdication of Philosophy, strictly so called, and renders not only its farther progress, but its very existence, impossible. What, they would say, have the persuasions, or instinctive beliefs, or whatever they are called, of men, to do in this matter ? Is it not the object of Philosophy to enlighten, and rectify, and many times directly contradict these very beliefs ? Take, for

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[1] The name of Dugald Stewart is a name venerable to all Europe, and to none more dear and venerable than to ourselves. Nevertheless his writings are not a Philosophy, but a making ready for one. He does not enter on the field to till it; he only encompasses it with fences, invites cultivators, and drives away intruders: often (fallen on evil days) he is reduced to long arguments with the passers-by, to prove that it *is* a field, that this so highly prized domain of his is, in truth, soil and substance, not clouds and shadow. We regard his discussions on the nature of Philosophic Language, and his

unwearied efforts to set forth and guard against its fallacies, as worthy of all acknowledgment ; as indeed forming the greatest, perhaps the only true improvement, which Philosophy has received among us in our age. It is only to a superficial observer that the import of these discussions can seem trivial ; rightly understood, they give sufficient and final answer to Hartley's and Darwin's, and all other possible forms of Materialism, the grand Idolatry, as we may rightly call it, by which, in all times, the true Worship, that of the Invisible, has been polluted and withstood. Mr. Stewart has written warmly against Kant ; but it would surprise him to find how much of a Kantist he himself essentially is. Has not the whole scope of his labors been to reconcile what a Kantist would call his Understanding with his Reason ; a noble, but still too fruitless effort to overarch the chasm which, for all minds but his own, separates his Science from his Religion ? We regard the assiduous study of his Works as the best preparation for studying those of Kant.

instance, the voice of all generations of men on the subject of Astronomy. Will there, out of any age or climate, be one dissentient against the *fact* of the Sun's going round the Earth? Can any evidence be clearer; is there any persuasion more universal, any belief more instinctive? And yet the Sun moves no hair's-breadth; but stands in the centre of his Planets, let us vote as we please. So is it likewise with our evidence for an external independent existence of Matter, and, in general, with our whole argument against Hume; whose reasonings, from the premises admitted both by him and us, the Germans affirm to be rigorously consistent and legitimate, and, on these premises, altogether uncontroverted and incontrovertible. British Philosophy, since the time of Hume, appears to them nothing more than a "laborious and unsuccessful striving to build dike after dike in front of our Churches and Judgment-halls, and so turn back from them the deluge of Scepticism, with which that extraordinary writer overflowed us, and still threatens to destroy whatever we value most." This is August Wilhelm Schlegel's verdict; given in words equivalent to these.

The Germans take up the matter differently, and would assail Hume, not in his outworks, but in the centre of his citadel. They deny his first principle, that Sense is the only inlet of Knowledge, that Experience is the primary ground of Belief. Their Primitive Truth, however, they seek, not historically and by experiment, in the universal persuasions of men, but by intuition, in the deepest and purest nature of Man. Instead of attempting, which they consider vain, to prove the existence of God, Virtue, an immaterial Soul, by inferences drawn, as the conclusion of all Philosophy, from the world of Sense, they find these things written as the beginning of all Philosophy, in obscured but ineffaceable characters, within our inmost being; and themselves first affording any certainty and clear meaning to that very world of Sense, by which we endeavor to demonstrate them. God *is*, nay alone *is*, for with like emphasis we cannot say that anything else is. This is the Absolute, the Primitively True, which the philosopher seeks. Endeavoring, by logical argument, to prove the existence of God, a Kantist might say, would be like taking out a candle to look for the sun; nay, gaze steadily into your candle-light, and the sun himself may be invisible. To open the inward eye to the sight of this Primitively True; or rather we might call it, to clear off the Obscurations of Sense, which eclipse this truth within us, so that we may see it, and believe it not only to be true, but the foundation and essence of all other truth, — may, in such language as we are here using, be said to be the problem of Critical Philosophy.

In this point of view, Kant's system may be thought to have a remote affinity to those of Malebranche and Descartes. But if they in some measure agree as to their aim, there is the widest difference as to the means. We state what to ourselves has long appeared the grand characteristic of Kant's Philosophy, when we mention his distinction, seldom perhaps expressed so broadly, but uniformly implied, between Understanding and Reason (*Verstand* and *Vernunft*). To most of our readers this may seem a distinction without a difference: nevertheless, to the Kantists it is by no means such. They believe that both Understanding and Reason are organs, or rather, we should say, modes of operation, by which the mind discovers truth; but they think that their manner of proceeding is essentially different; that their provinces are separable and distinguishable, nay that it is of the last importance to separate and distinguish them. Reason, the Kantists say, is of a higher nature than Understanding; it works by more subtle methods, on higher objects, and requires a far finer culture for its development, indeed in many men it is never developed at all: but its results are no less certain, nay rather, they are much more so; for Reason discerns Truth itself, the absolutely and primitively *True;* while Understanding discerns only *relations*, and cannot decide without *if*. The proper province of Understanding is all, strictly speaking, *real*, practical and material knowledge, Mathematics, Physics, Political Economy, the adaptation of means to ends in the whole business of life. In this province it is the strength and universal implement of the mind: an indispensable servant, without which, indeed, existence itself would be impossible. Let it not step beyond this province, however; not usurp the province of Reason, which it is appointed to obey, and cannot rule over without ruin to the whole spiritual man. Should Understanding attempt to prove the existence of God, it ends, if thoroughgoing and consistent with itself, in Atheism, or a faint possible Theism, which scarcely differs from this: should it speculate of Virtue, it ends in *Utility*, making Prudence and a sufficiently cunning love of Self the highest good. Consult Understanding about the Beauty of Poetry, and it asks, Where is this Beauty? or discovers it at length in rhythms and fitnesses, and male and female rhymes. Witness also its everlasting paradoxes on Necessity and the Freedom of the Will; its ominous silence on the end and meaning of man; and the enigma which, under such inspection, the whole purport of existence becomes.

Nevertheless, say the Kantists, there is a truth in these things. Virtue is Virtue, and not Prudence; not less surely than the angle in a semicircle is a right angle, and no trapezium: Shakspeare is a Poet, and Boileau is none, think of it as you may: neither is it more certain that I myself exist, than that God exists, infinite, eternal, invisible, the same yesterday, to-day and forever. To discern these truths is the province of Reason, which therefore is to be cultivated as the highest faculty in man. Not by logic and argument does it work; yet surely and clearly may it be taught to work: and its domain lies in that higher region whither logic and argument cannot reach; in that holier region, where Poetry, and Virtue and Divinity abide, in whose presence Understanding wavers and recoils, dazzled into utter darkness by that "sea of light," at once the fountain and the termination of all true knowledge.

Will the Kantists forgive us for the loose and popular manner in which we must here speak of these things, to bring them in any measure before the eyes of our readers? — It may illustrate the distinction still farther, if we say, that in the opinion of a Kantist the French are of all European nations the most gifted with Understanding, and the most destitute of Reason;[1] that David Hume had no forecast of this latter; and that Shakspeare and Luther dwelt perennially in its purest sphere.

Of the vast, nay in these days boundless, importance of this distinction, could it be scientifically established, we need remind no thinking man. For the rest, far be it from the reader to suppose that this same Reason is but a new appearance, under another name, of our own old "Wholesome Prejudice," so well known to most of us! Prejudice, wholesome or unwholesome, is a personage for whom the German Philosophers disclaim all shadow of respect; nor do the vehement among them hide their deep disdain for all and sundry who fight under her flag. Truth is to be loved purely and solely because it is true. With moral, political, religious considerations, high and dear as they may otherwise be, the Philosopher, as such, has no concern. To look at them would but perplex him, and distract his vision from the task in his hands. Calmly he constructs his theorem, as the Geometer does his, without hope or fear, save that he may or may not find the solution; and stands in the middle, by the one, it may be, accused as an Infidel, by the other as an Enthusiast and a Mystic, till the tumult ceases, and what was true, is and continues true to the end of all time.

Such are some of the high and momentous questions treated of, by calm, earnest and deeply meditative men, in this system of Philosophy, which to the wiser minds among us is still unknown, and by the unwiser is spoken of and regarded in such manner as we see. The profoundness, subtlety, extent of investigation, which the answer of these questions presupposes, need not be farther pointed out. With the truth or falsehood of the system, we have here, as already stated, no concern: our aim has been, so far as might be done, to show it as it appeared to us; and to ask such of our readers as pursue these studies, whether this also is not worthy of some study. The reply we must now leave to themselves.

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[1] Schelling has said as much or more (*Methode des Academischen Studium*, pp. 105–111), in terms which we could wish we had space to transcribe.

As an appendage to the charge of Mysticism brought against the Germans, there is often added the seemingly incongruous one of Irreligion. On this point also we had much to say; but must for the present decline it. Meanwhile, let the reader be assured, that to the charge of Irreligion, as to so many others, the Germans will plead not guilty. On the contrary, they will not scruple to assert that their literature is, in a positive sense, religious; nay, perhaps to maintain, that if ever neighboring nations are to recover that pure and high spirit of devotion, the loss of which, however we may disguise it or pretend to overlook it, can be hidden from no observant mind, it must be by travelling, if not on the same path, at least in the same direction in which the Germans have already begun to travel. We shall add, that the Religion of Germany is a subject not for slight but for deep study, and, if we mistake not, may in some degree reward the deepest.

Here, however, we must close our examination or defence. We have spoken freely, because we felt distinctly, and thought the matter worthy of being stated, and more fully inquired into. Farther than this, we have no quarrel for the Germans: we would have justice done to them, as to all men and all things; but for their literature or character we profess no sectarian or exclusive preference. We think their recent Poetry, indeed, superior to the recent Poetry of any other nation; but taken as a whole, inferior to that of several; inferior not to our own only, but to that of Italy, nay perhaps to that of Spain. Their Philosophy too must still be regarded as uncertain; at best only the beginning of better things. But surely even this is not to be neglected. A little light is precious in great darkness: nor, amid the myriads of Poetasters and *Philosophes,* are Poets and Philosophers so numerous that we should reject such, when they speak to us in the hard, but manly, deep and expressive tones of that old Saxon speech, which is also our mother-tongue.

We confess, the present aspect of spiritual Europe might fill a melancholic observer with doubt and foreboding. It is mournful to see so many noble, tender and high-aspiring minds deserted of that religious light which once guided all such: standing sorrowful on the scene of past convulsions and controversies, as on a scene blackened and burnt up with fire; mourning in the darkness, because there is desolation, and no home for the soul; or what is worse, pitching tents among the ashes, and kindling weak earthly lamps which we are to take for stars. This darkness is but transitory obscuration: these ashes are the soil of future herbage and richer harvests. Religion, Poetry, is not dead; it will never die. Its dwelling and birthplace is in the soul of man, and it is eternal as the being of man. In any point of Space, in any section of Time, let there be a living Man; and there is an Infinitude above him and beneath him, and an Eternity encompasses him on this hand and on that; and tones of Sphere-music, and tidings from loftier worlds, will flit round him, if he can but listen, and visit him with holy influences, even in the thickest press of trivialities, or the din of busiest life. Happy the man, happy the nation that can hear these tidings; that has them written in fit characters, legible to every eye, and the solemn import of them present at all moments to every heart! That there is, in these days, no nation so happy, is too clear; but that all nations, and ourselves in the van, are, with more or less discernment of its nature, struggling towards this happiness, is the hope and the glory of our time. To us, as to others, success, at a distant or a nearer day, cannot be uncertain. Meanwhile, the first condition of success is, that, in striving honestly ourselves, we honestly acknowledge the striving of our neighbor; that with a Will unwearied in seeking Truth, we have a Sense open for it, wheresoever and howsoever it may arise.

LIFE AND WRITINGS OF WERNER.[1]

[1828.]

If the charm of fame consisted, as Horace has mistakenly declared, "in being pointed at with the finger, and having it said, This is he!" few writers of the present age could boast of more fame than Werner. It has been the unhappy fortune of this man to stand for a long period incessantly before the world, in a far stronger light than naturally belonged to him, or could exhibit him to advantage. Twenty years ago he was a man of considerable note, which has ever since been degenerating into notoriety. The mystic dramatist, the sceptical enthusiast, was known and partly esteemed by all students of poetry; Madame de Staël, we recollect, allows him an entire chapter in her *Allemagne*. It was a much coarser curiosity, and in a much wider circle, which the dissipated man, by successive indecorums, occasioned; till at last the convert to Popery, the preaching zealot, came to figure in all newspapers; and some picture of him was required for all heads that would not sit blank and mute in the topic of every coffee-house and

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[1] Foreign Review, No. 1.—*Lebens-Abriss Friedrich Ludwig Zacharias Werners. Von dem Herausgeber von Hoffmanns Leben und Nachlass.* (Sketch of the Life of Friedrich Ludwig Zacharias Werner. By the Editor of "Hoffmann's Life and Remains.") Berlin, 1823.

2. *Die Söhne des Thals.* (The Sons of the Valley.) A Dramatic Poem. Part I. *Die Templer auf Cypern.* (The Templars in Cyprus.) Part II. *Die Kreuzesbrüder.* (The Brethren of the Cross.) Berlin, 1801, 1802.

3. *Das Kreuz an der Ostsee.* (The Cross on the Baltic.) A Tragedy. Berlin, 1806.

4. *Martin Luther, oder die Weihe der Kraft.* (Martin Luther, or the Consecration of Strength.) A Tragedy. Berlin, 1807.

5. *Die Mutter der Makkabäer.* (The Mother of the Maccabees.) A Tragedy. Vienna, 1820.

æsthetic tea. In dim heads, that is, in the great majority, the picture was, of course, perverted into a strange bugbear, and the original decisively enough condemned; but even the few, who might see him in his true shape, felt too well that nothing loud could be said in his behalf; that, with so many mournful blemishes, if extenuation could not avail, no complete defence was to be attempted.

At the same time, it is not the history of a mere literary profligate that we have here to do with. Of men whom fine talents cannot teach the humblest prudence, whose high feeling, unexpressed in noble action, must lie smouldering with baser admixtures in their own bosom, till their existence, assaulted from without and from within, becomes a burnt and blackened ruin, to be sighed over by the few, and stared at, or trampled on, by the many, there is unhappily no want in any country; nor can the unnatural union of genius with depravity and degradation have such charms for our readers, that we should go abroad in quest of it, or in any case dwell on it otherwise than with reluctance. Werner is something more than this: a gifted spirit, struggling earnestly amid the new, complex, tumultuous influences of his time and country, but without force to body himself forth from amongst them; a keen adventurous swimmer, aiming towards high and distant landmarks, but too weakly in so rough a sea; for the currents drive him far astray, and he sinks at last in the waves, attaining little for himself, and leaving little, save the memory of his failure, to others. A glance over his history may not be unprofitable; if the man himself can less interest us, the ocean of German, of European Opinion still rolls in wild eddies to and fro; and with its movements and refluxes, indicated in the history of such men, every one of us is concerned.

Our materials for this survey are deficient, not so much in quantity as quality. The "Life," now known to be by Hitzig of Berlin, seems a very honest, unpresuming performance; but, on the other hand, it is much too fragmentary and discursive for our wants; the features of the man are nowhere united into a portrait, but left for the reader to unite as he may; a task which, to most readers, will be hard enough: for the Work, short in compass, is more than proportionally short in details of facts; and Werner's history, much as an intimate friend must have known of it, still lies before us, in great part, dark and unintelligible. For what he has done we should doubtless thank our Author; yet it seems a pity, that in this instance he had not done more and better. A singular chance made him, at the same time, companion of both Hoffmann and Werner, perhaps the two most showy, heterogeneous and misinterpretable writers of his day; nor shall we deny that, in performing a friend's duty to their memory, he has done truth also a service. His *Life of Hoffmann,*[1] pretending to no artfulnesss of arrangement, is redundant, rather than defective, in minuteness; but there, at least, the means of a correct judgment are brought within our reach, and the work, as usual with Hitzig, bears marks of the utmost fairness; and of an accuracy which we might almost call professional: for the Author, it would seem, is a legal functionary of long standing, and now of respectable rank; and he examines and records, with a certain notarial strictness too rare in compilations of this sort.

So far as Hoffmann is concerned, therefore, we have reason to be satisfied. In regard to Werner, however, we cannot say so much: here we should certainly have wished for more facts, though it had been with fewer consequences drawn from them; were these somewhat chaotic expositions of Werner's character exchanged for simple particulars of his walk and conversation, the result would be much surer, and, especially to foreigners, much more complete and luminous. As it is, from repeated perusals of this biography, we have failed to gather any very clear notion of the man: nor, with perhaps more study of his writings than, on other grounds, they could have merited, does his manner of existence still stand out to us with that distinct cohesion which puts an end to doubt. Our view of him the reader will accept as an approximation, and be content to wonder with us, and charitably pause where we cannot altogether interpret.

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[1] See Appendix I. No. 2. § *Hoffmann.*

Werner was born at Königsberg, in East Prussia, on the 18th of November, 1768. His father was Professor of History and Eloquence in the University there; and farther, in virtue of this office, Dramatic Censor; which latter circumstance procured young Werner almost daily opportunity of visiting the theatre, and so gave him, as he says, a greater acquaintance with the mechanism of the stage than even most players are possessed of. A strong taste for the drama it probably enough gave him; but this skill in stage-mechanism may be questioned, for often in his own plays, no such skill, but rather the want of it, is evinced.

The Professor and Censor, of whom we hear nothing in blame or praise, died in the fourteenth year of his son, and the boy now fell to the sole charge of his mother; a woman whom he seems to have loved warmly, but whose guardianship could scarcely be the best for him. Werner himself speaks of her in earnest commendation, as of a pure, high-minded and heavily afflicted being. Hoffmann, however, adds, that she was hypochondriacal, and generally quite delirious, imagining herself to be the Virgin Mary, and her son to be the promised Shiloh! Hoffmann had opportunity enough of knowing; for it is a curious fact that these two singular persons were brought up under the same roof, though, at this time, by reason of their difference of age, Werner being eight years older, they had little or no acquaintance. What a nervous and melancholic parent was, Hoffmann, by another unhappy coincidence, had also full occasion to know: his own mother, parted from her husband, lay helpless and broken-hearted for the last seventeen years of her life, and the first seventeen of his; a source of painful influences, which he used to trace through the whole of his own character; as to the like cause he imputed the primary perversion of Werner's. How far his views on this point were accurate or exaggerated, we have no means of judging.

Of Werner's early years the biographer says little or nothing. We learn only that, about the usual age, he matriculated in the Königsberg University, intending to qualify himself for the business of a lawyer; and with his professional studies united, or attempted to unite, the study of philosophy under Kant. His college-life is characterized by a single, but too expressive word: "It is said," observes Hitzig, "to have been very dissolute." His progress in metaphysics, as in all branches of learning, might thus be expected to be small; indeed, at no period of his life can he, even in the language of panegyric, be called a man of culture or solid information on any subject. Nevertheless, he contrived, in his twenty-first year, to publish a little volume of "Poems," apparently in very tolerable magazine metre; and after some "roamings" over Germany, having loitered for a while at Berlin, and longer at Dresden, he betook himself to more serious business; applied for admittance and promotion as a Prussian man of law; the employment which young jurists look for in that country being chiefly in the hands of Government; consisting, indeed, of appointments in the various judicial or administrative Boards by which the Provinces are managed. In 1793, Werner accordingly was made *Kammersecretär* (Exchequer Secretary); a subaltern office, which he held successively in several stations, and last and longest in Warsaw, where Hitzig, a young man following the same profession, first became acquainted with him in 1799.

What the purport or result of Werner's "roamings" may have been, or how he had demeaned himself in office or out of it, we are nowhere informed; but it is an ominous circumstance that, even at this period, in his thirtieth year, he had divorced *two* wives, the last at least by mutual consent, and was looking out for a third! Hitzig, with whom he seems to have formed a prompt and close intimacy, gives us no full picture of him under any of his aspects: yet we can see that his life, as naturally it might, already wore somewhat of a shattered appearance in his own eyes; that he was broken in character, in spirit, perhaps in bodily constitution; and, contenting himself with the transient gratifications of so gay a city and so tolerable an appointment, had renounced all steady and rational hope either of being happy, or of deserving to be so. Of unsteady and irrational hopes, however, he had still abundance. The fine enthusiasm of his nature, undestroyed by so many external perplexities, nay to which perhaps these very perplexities had given fresh and undue excitement, glowed forth in strange many-colored brightness from amid the wreck of his fortunes; and led him into wild worlds of speculation, the more vehemently, that the real world of action and duty had become so unmanageable in his hands.

Werner's early publication had sunk, after a brief provincial life, into merited oblivion: in fact, he had then only been a rhymer, and was now, for the first time, beginning to be a poet. We have one of those youthful pieces transcribed in this Volume, and certainly it exhibits a curious contrast with his subsequent writings, both in form and spirit. In form, because, unlike the first-fruits of a genius, it is cold and correct; while his later works, without exception, are fervid, extravagant and full of gross blemishes. In spirit no less, because, treating of his favorite theme, Religion, it treats of it harshly and sceptically; being, indeed, little more than a metrical version of common Utilitarian Free-thinking, as it may be found (without metre) in most taverns and debating-societies. Werner's intermediate secret-history might form a strange chapter in psychology: for now, it is clear, his French scepticism had got overlaid with wondrous theosophic garniture; his mind was full of visions and cloudy glories, and no occupation pleased him better than to controvert, in generous inquiring minds, that very unbelief which he appears to have once entertained in his own. From Hitzig's account of the matter, this seems to have formed the strongest link of *his* intercourse with Werner. The latter was his senior by ten years of time, and by more than ten years of unhappy experience; the grand questions of Immortality, of Fate, Free-will, Foreknowledge absolute, were in continual agitation between them; and Hitzig still remembers with gratitude these earnest warnings against irregularity of life, and so many ardent and not ineffectual endeavors to awaken in the passionate temperament of youth a glow of purer and enlightening fire.

"Some leagues from Warsaw," says the Biographer, "enchantingly embosomed in a thick wood, close by the high banks of the Vistula, lies the Camaldulensian Abbey of Bielany, inhabited by a class of monks, who in strictness of discipline yield only to those of La Trappe. To this cloistral solitude Werner was wont to repair with his friend, every fine Saturday of the summer of 1800, so soon as their occupations in the city were over. In defect of any formal inn, the two used to bivouac in the forest, or at best to sleep under a temporary tent. The Sunday was then spent in the open air; in roving about the woods; sailing on the river, and the like; till late night recalled them to the city. On such occasions, the younger of the party had ample room to unfold his whole heart before his more mature and settled companion; to advance his doubts and objections against many theories, which Werner was already cherishing; and so, by exciting him with contradiction, to cause him to make them clearer to himself."

Week after week, these discussions were carefully resumed from the point where they had been left: indeed, to Werner, it would seem, this controversy had unusual attractions; for he was now busy composing a Poem, intended principally to convince the world of those very truths which he was striving to impress on his friend; and to which the world, as might be expected, was likely to give a similar reception. The character, or at least the way of thought, attributed to Robert d'Heredon, the Scottish Templar, in the *Sons of the Valley*, was borrowed, it appears, as if by regular instalments, from these conferences with Hitzig; the result of the one Sunday being duly entered in dramatic form during the week; then audited on the Sunday following; and so forming the text for farther disquisition. "Blissful days," adds Hitzig, "pure and innocent, which doubtless Werner also ever held in pleased remembrance!"

The *Söhne des Thals*, composed in this rather questionable fashion, was in due time forthcoming; the First Part in 1801, the Second about a year afterwards. It is a drama, or rather two dramas, unrivalled at least in one particular, in length; each Part being a play of six acts, and the whole amounting to somewhat more than 800 small octavo pages! To attempt any analysis of such a work would but fatigue our readers to little purpose: it is, as might be anticipated, of a most loose and formless structure; expanding on all sides into vague boundlessness, and, on the whole, resembling not so much a poem as the rude materials of one. The subject is the destruction of the Templar Order; an event which has been dramatized more than once, but on which, notwithstanding, Werner, we suppose, may boast of being entirely original. The fate of Jacques Molay and his brethren acts here but like a little leaven: and lucky were we, could it leaven the lump; but it lies buried under such a mass of Mystical theology, Masonic mummery, Cabalistic tradition and Rosicrucian philosophy, as no power could work into dramatic union. The incidents are few, and of little interest; interrupted continually by flaring shows and long-winded speculations; for Werner's besetting sin, that of loquacity, is here in decided action; and so we wander, in aimless windings, through scene after scene of gorgeousness or gloom; till at last the whole rises before us like a wild phantasmagoria; cloud heaped on cloud, painted indeed here and there with prismatic hues, but representing nothing, or at least not the subject, but the author.

In this last point of view, however, as a picture of himself, independently of other considerations, this play of Werner's may still have a certain value for us. The strange chaotic nature of the man is displayed in it: his scepticism and theosophy; his audacity, yet intrinsic weakness of character; his baffled longings, but still ardent endeavors after Truth and Good; his search for them in far journeyings, not on the beaten highways, but through the pathless infinitudes of Thought. To call it a work of art would be a misapplication of names: it is little more than a rhapsodic effusion; the outpouring of a passionate and mystic soul, only half-knowing what it utters, and not ruling its own movements, but ruled by them. It is fair to add, that such also, in a great measure, was Werner's own view of the matter: most likely the utterance of these things gave him such relief, that, crude as they were, he could not suppress them. For it ought to be remembered, that in this performance one condition, at least, of genuine inspiration is not wanting: Werner evidently thinks that in these his ultramundane excursions he has found truth; he has something positive to set forth, and he feels himself as if bound on a high and holy mission in preaching it to his fellow-men.

To explain with any minuteness the articles of Werner's creed, as it was now fashioned and is here exhibited, would be a task perhaps too hard for us, and, at all events, unprofitable in proportion to its difficulty. We have found some separable passages, in which, under dark symbolical figures, he has himself shadowed forth a vague likeness of it: these we shall now submit to the reader, with such expositions as we gather from the context, or as German readers, from the usual tone of speculation in that country, are naturally enabled to supply. This may, at the same time, convey as fair a notion of the work itself, with its tawdry splendors, and tumid grandiloquence, and mere playhouse thunder and lightning, as by any other plan our limits would admit.

Let the reader fancy himself in the island of Cyprus, where the Order of the Templars still subsists, though the heads of it are already summoned before the French King and Pope Clement; which summons they are now, not without dreary enough forebodings, preparing to obey. The purport of this First Part, so far as it has any dramatic purport, is to paint the situation, outward and inward, of that once pious and heroic, and still magnificent and powerful body. It is entitled *The Templars in Cyprus;* but why it should also be called *The Sons of the Valley* does not so well appear; for the Brotherhood of the *Valley* has yet scarcely come into activity, and only hovers before us in glimpses, of so enigmatic a sort, that we know not fully so much as whether these its *Sons* are of flesh and blood like ourselves, or of some spiritual nature, or of something intermediate and altogether nondescript. For the rest, it is a series of spectacles and dissertations; the action cannot so much be said to advance as to revolve. On this occasion the Templars are admitting two new members; the acolytes have already passed their preliminary trials; this is the chief and final one:—

ACT V. SCENE I.

Midnight. Interior of the Temple Church. Backwards, a deep perspective of Altars and Gothic Pillars. On the right-hand side of the foreground, a little Chapel; and in this an Altar with the figure of St. Sebastian. The scene is lighted very dimly by a single Lamp which hangs before the Altar.

. . . . .

ADALBERT [*dressed in white, without mantle or doublet; groping his way in the dark*].

Was it not at the altar of Sebastian
That I was bidden wait for the Unknown?
Here should it be; but darkness with her veil
Inwraps the figures. [*Advancing to the Altar.*
Here is the fifth pillar!
Yes, this is he, the Sainted. — How the glimmer
Of that faint lamp falls on his fading eye! —
Ah, it is not the spears o' th' Saracens,
It is the pangs of hopeless love that burning
Transfix thy heart, poor Comrade! — O my Agnes,
May not thy spirit, in this earnest hour,
Be looking on? Art hovering in that moonbeam
Which struggles through the painted window, and dies
Amid the cloister's gloom? Or linger'st thou
Behind these pillars, which, ominous and black,
Look down on me, like horrors of the Past
Upon the Present; and hidest thy gentle form,
Lest with thy paleness thou too much affright me?
Hide not thyself, pale shadow of my Agnes,
Thou affrightest not thy lover. — Hush! —
Hark! Was not there a rustling? — Father! You?

PHILIP [*rushing in with wild looks*].

Yes, Adalbert! — But time is precious! — Come,
My son, my one sole Adalbert, come with me!

ADALBERT. What would you, father, in this solemn hour?

PHILIP. This hour, or never! [*Leading Adalbert to the Altar.*
Hither! — Knowest thou *him*?

ADALBERT. 'T is Saint Sebastian.

PHILIP. Because he would not
Renounce his faith, a tyrant had him murdered. [*Points to his head.*
These furrows, too, the rage of tyrants ploughed

In thy old father's face. My son, my first-born child,
In this great hour I do conjure thee! Wilt thou,
Wilt thou obey me?
ADALBERT. Be it just, I will!
PHILIP. Then swear, in this great hour, in this dread presence,
Here by thy father's head made early gray,
By the remembrance of thy mother's agony,
And by the ravished blossom of thy Agnes,
Against the Tyranny which sacrificed us,
Inexpiable, bloody, everlasting hate!
ADALBERT. Ha! *This* the All-avenger spoke through thee! —
Yes! Bloody shall my Agnes' death-torch burn
In Philip's heart; I swear it!
PHILIP [*with increasing vehemence*]. And if thou break
This oath, and if thou reconcile thee to him,
Or let his golden chains, his gifts, his prayers,
His dying moan itself avert thy dagger
When th' hour of vengeance comes, — shall this gray head,
Thy mother's wail, the last sigh of thy Agnes,
Accuse thee at the bar of the Eternal!
ADALBERT. So be it, if I break my oath!
PHILIP. Then man thee! —
[*Looking up, then shrinking together, as with dazzled eyes.*
Ha! was not that his lightning? — Fare thee well!
I hear the footstep of the Dreaded! — Firm —
Remember me, remember this stern midnight! [*Retires hastily.*
ADALBERT [*alone*]. Yes, Grayhead, whom the beckoning of the Lord
Sent hither to awake me out of craven sleep,
I will remember thee and this stern midnight,
And my Agnes' spirit shall have vengeance! —

Enter an Armed Man. He is mailed from head to foot in black harness; his visor is closed.

ARMED MAN. Pray! [*Adalbert kneels.*
Bare thyself! — [*He strips him to the girdle and raises him.*
Look on the ground, and follow!
[*He leads him into the background to a trap-door, on the right. He descends first himself; and when Adalbert has followed him, it closes.*

SCENE II.

Cemetery of the Templars, under the Church. The scene is lighted only by a Lamp which hangs down from the vault. Around are Tombstones of deceased Knights, marked with Crosses and sculptured Bones. In the background, two colossal Skeletons holding between them a large white Book, marked with a red Cross; from the under end of the Book hangs a long black curtain. The Book, of which only the cover is visible, has an inscription in black ciphers. The Skeleton on the right holds in its right hand a naked drawn Sword; that on the left holds in its left hand a Palm turned downwards. On the right side of the foreground stands a black Coffin open; on the left, a similar one with the body of a Templar in the full dress of his Order; on both Coffins are inscriptions in white ciphers. On each side, nearer the background, are seen the lowest steps of the stairs which lead up into the Temple Church above the vault.

ARMED MAN [*not yet visible; above on the right hand stairs*].
Dreaded! Is the grave laid open?
CONCEALED VOICES. Yea!
ARMED MAN [*who after a pause shows himself on the stairs*].
Shall he behold the Tombs o' th' fathers?
CONCEALED VOICES. Yea!
[*Armed Man with drawn sword leads Adalbert carefully down the steps on the right hand.*
ARMED MAN [*to Adalbert*].
Look down! 'T is on thy life! [*Leads him to the open Coffin.*
What seest thou?
ADALBERT. An open empty Coffin.
ARMED MAN. 'T is the house
Where thou one day shalt dwell. — Canst read the inscription?
ADALBERT. No.
ARMED MAN. Hear it, then: "Thy wages, Sin, is Death."
[*Leads him to the opposite Coffin where the Body is lying.*
Look down! 'T is on thy life! — What seest thou? [*Shows the Coffin.*
ADALBERT. A Coffin with a Corpse.
ARMED MAN. He is thy Brother;
One day thou art as he. — Canst read th' inscription?
ADALBERT. No.
ARMED MAN. Hear: "Corruption is the name of Life."
Now look around; go forward, — move, and act! —
[*He pushes him towards the background of the stage.*

ADALBERT [*observing the Book*].
Ha! Here the Book of Ordination! — Seems [*Approaching.*
As if th' inscription on it might be read. [*He reads it.*

"Knock four times on the ground,
Thou shalt behold thy loved one."

O Heavens! And may I see thee, sainted Agnes?
My bosom yearns for thee! — [*Hastening close to the Book.*
[*With the following words, he stamps four times on the ground.*
One, — Two, — Three, — Four! —

[*The curtain hanging from the Book rolls rapidly up, and covers it. A colossal Devil's-head appears between the two Skeletons; its form is horrible; it is gilt; has a huge golden Crown, a Heart of the same on its Brow; rolling flaming Eyes; Serpents instead of Hair; golden Chains round its neck, which is visible to the breast; and a golden Cross, yet not a Crucifix, which rises over its right shoulder, as if crushing it down. The whole Bust rests on four gilt Dragon's-feet. At sight of it, Adalbert starts back in horror, and exclaims:*

Defend us!

ARMED MAN. Dreaded! may he hear it?
CONCEALED VOICES. Yea!
ARMED MAN [*touches the Curtain with his sword; it rolls down over the Devil's-head, concealing it again; and above, as before, appears the Book, but now opened, with white colossal leaves and red characters. The Armed Man, pointing constantly to the Book with his Sword, and therewith turning the leaves, addresses Adalbert, who stands on the other side of the Book, and nearer the foreground*].

List to the Story of the Fallen Master.
[*He reads the following from the Book; yet not standing before it, but on one side, at some paces distance, and whilst he reads, turning the leaves with his Sword.*

"So now when the foundation-stone was laid,
The Lord called forth the Master, Baffometus,
And said to him: Go and complete my Temple!
But in his heart the Master thought: What boots it
Building thee a temple? and took the stones,
And built himself a dwelling, and what stones
Were left he gave for filthy gold and silver.
Now after forty moons the Lord returned,
And spake: Where is my Temple, Baffometus?

The Master said: I had to build myself
A dwelling; grant me other forty weeks.
And after forty weeks, the Lord returns,
And asks: Where is my Temple, Baffometus?
He said: There were no stones (but he had sold them
For filthy gold); so wait yet forty days.
In forty days thereafter came the Lord,
And cried: Where is my Temple, Baffometus?
Then like a millstone fell it on his soul
How he for lucre had betrayed his Lord;
But yet to other sin the Fiend did tempt him,
And he answered, saying: Give me forty hours!
And when the forty hours were gone, the Lord
Came down in wrath: My Temple, Baffometus?
Then fell he quaking on his face, and cried
For mercy; but the Lord was wroth, and said:
Since thou hast cozened me with empty lies,
And those the stones I lent thee for my Temple
Hast sold them for a purse of filthy gold,
Lo, I will cast thee forth, and with the Mammon
Will chastise thee, until a Saviour rise
Of thy own seed, who shall redeem thy trespass.
Then did the Lord lift up the purse of gold;
And shook the gold into a melting-pot,
And set the melting-pot upon the Sun,
So that the metal fused into a fluid mass.
And then he dipt a finger in the same,
And straightway touching Baffometus,
Anoints him on the chin and brow and cheeks.
Then was the face of Baffometus changed:
His eyeballs rolled like fire-flames,
His nose became a crooked vulture's bill,
The tongue hung bloody from his throat; the flesh
Went from his hollow cheeks; and of his hair
Grew snakes, and of the snakes grew Devil's-horns.
Again the Lord put forth his finger with the gold,
And pressed it upon Baffometus' heart;
Whereby the heart did bleed and wither up,
And all his members bled and withered up,
And fell away, the one and then the other.
At last his back itself sunk into ashes;
The head alone continued gilt and living;

And instead of back, grew dragon's-talons,
Which destroyed all life from off the Earth.
Then from the ground the Lord took up the heart,
Which, as he touched it, also grew of gold,
And placed it on the brow of Baffometus;
And of the other metal in the pot
He made for him a burning crown of gold,
And crushed it on his serpent-hair, so that
Even to the bone and brain the circlet scorched him.
And round the neck he twisted golden chains,
Which strangled him and pressed his breath together.
What in the pot remained he poured upon the ground,
Athwart, along, and there it formed a cross;
The which he lifted and laid upon his neck,
And bent him that he could not raise his head.
Two Deaths moreover he appointed warders
To guard him: Death of Life, and Death of Hope.
The Sword of the first he sees not, but it smites him;
The other's Palm he sees, but it escapes him.
So languishes the outcast Baffometus
Four thousand years and four-and-forty moons,
Till once a Saviour rise from his own seed,
Redeem his trespass and deliver him." [*To Adalbert.*
This is the Story of the Fallen Master.

[*With his Sword he touches the Curtain, which now as before rolls up over the Book; so that the Head under it again becomes visible, in its former shape.*

ADALBERT [*looking at the Head*].
Hah, what a hideous shape!

HEAD [*with a hollow voice*]. Deliver me!—

ARMED MAN. Dreaded! shall the work begin?

CONCEALED VOICES. Yea!

ARMED MAN [*to Adalbert*]. Take the neckband
Away! [*Pointing to the Head.*

ADALBERT. I dare not!

HEAD [*with a still more piteous tone*]. Oh, deliver me!

ADALBERT [*taking off the chains*]. Poor fallen one!

ARMED MAN. Now lift the crown from 's head!

ADALBERT. It seems so heavy!

ARMED MAN. Touch it, it grows light.

[*Adalbert taking off the Crown and casting it, as he did the chains, on the ground.*

Armed Man. Now take the golden heart from off his brow!
Adalbert. It seems to burn!
Armed Man. Thou errest: ice is warmer.
Adalbert [*taking the Heart from the Brow*].
Hah! shivering frost!
Armed Man. Take from his back the Cross,
And throw it from thee! —
Adalbert. How! The Saviour's token?
Head. Deliver, oh, deliver me!
Armed Man. This Cross
Is not thy Master's, not that bloody one:
Its counterfeit is this: throw 't from thee!
Adalbert [*taking it from the Bust, and laying it softly on the ground*].
The Cross of the Good Lord that died for me?
Armed Man. *Thou shalt no more believe in one that died;*
Thou shalt henceforth believe in one that liveth
And never dies! — Obey, and question not, —
Step over it!
Adalbert. Take pity on me!
Armed Man [*threatening him with his Sword*]. Step!
Adalbert. I do 't with shuddering —
[*Steps over, and then looks up to the Head, which raises itself as freed from a load.*
How the figure rises
And looks in gladness!
Armed Man. Him whom thou hast served
Till now, deny!
Adalbert [*horror-struck*] Deny the Lord my God?
Armed Man. Thy God 't is not: the Idol of this World!
Deny him, or —
[*Pressing on him with the Sword in a threatening posture.*
— thou diest!
Adalbert. I deny!
Armed Man [*pointing to the Head with his Sword*].
Go to the Fallen! — Kiss his lips! —

— And so on through many other sulphurous pages! How much of this mummery is copied from the actual practice of the Templars we know not with certainty; nor what precisely either they or Werner intended, by this marvellous "Story of the Fallen Master," to shadow forth. At first view, one might take it for an allegory, couched in Masonic language, — and truly no flattering allegory, — of the Catholic Church; and this trampling on the Cross, which is said to have been actually enjoined on every Templar at his initiation, to be a type of his secret behest to undermine that Institution, and redeem the spirit of Religion from the state of thraldom and distortion under which it was there held. It is known at least, and was well known to Werner, that the heads of the Templars entertained views, both on religion and politics, which they did not think meet for communicating to their age, and only imparted by degrees, and under mysterious adumbrations, to the wiser of their own Order. They had even publicly resisted, and succeeded in thwarting, some iniquitous measures of Philippe Auguste, the French King, in regard to his coinage; and this, while it secured them the love of the people, was one great cause, perhaps second only to their wealth, of the hatred which that sovereign bore them, and of the savage doom which he at last executed on the whole body.

But on these secret principles of theirs, as on Werner's manner of conceiving them, we are only enabled to guess; for Werner, too, has an esoteric doctrine, which he does not promulgate, except in dark Sibylline enigmas, to the uninitiated. As we are here seeking chiefly for his religious creed, which forms, in truth, with its changes, the main thread whereby his wayward, desultory existence attains any unity or even coherence in our thoughts, we may quote another passage from the same First Part of this rhapsody; which, at the same time, will afford us a glimpse of his favorite hero, Robert d'Heredon, lately the darling of the Templars, but now, for some momentary infraction of their rules, cast into prison, and expecting death, or, at best, exclusion from the Order. Gottfried is another Templar, in all points the reverse of Robert.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

Prison; at the wall a Table. Robert, without sword, cap, or mantle, sits downcast on one side of it: Gottfried, who keeps watch by him, sitting at the other.

GOTTFRIED. But how couldst thou so far forget thyself?
Thou wert our pride, the Master's friend and favorite!
ROBERT. I did it, thou perceiv'st!
GOTTFRIED. How could a word
Of the old surly Hugo so provoke thee?
ROBERT. Ask not — Man's being is a spider-web:
The passionate flash o' th' soul — comes not of him;
It is the breath of that dark Genius,
Which whirls invisible along the threads:
A servant of eternal Destiny,
It purifies them from the vulgar dust,
Which earthward strives to press the net:
But Fate gives sign; the breath becomes a whirlwind,
And in a moment rends to shreds the thing
We thought was woven for Eternity.
GOTTFRIED. Yet each man shapes his Destiny himself.
ROBERT. Small soul! dost thou too know it? Has the story
Of Force and free Volition, that, defying
The corporal Atoms and Annihilation,
Methodic guides the car of Destiny,
Come down to *thee?* Dream'st thou, poor Nothingness,
That thou, and like of thee, and ten times better
Than thou or I, can lead the wheel of Fate
One hair's-breadth from its everlasting track?
I too have had such dreams: but fearfully
Have I been shook from sleep; and they are fled! —
Look at our Order: has it spared its thousands
Of noblest lives, the victims of its Purpose;
And has it gained this Purpose; can it gain it?
Look at our noble Molay's silvered hair:
The fruit of watchful nights and stormful days,
And of the broken yet still burning heart!
That mighty heart! — Through sixty battling years,
'T has beat in pain for nothing: his creation
Remains the vision of his own great soul;

It dies with him; and one day shall the pilgrim
Ask where his dust is lying, and not learn!
GOTTFRIED [*yawning*].
But then the Christian has the joy of Heaven
For recompense: in his flesh he shall see God.
ROBERT. In his flesh? — Now fair befall the journey!
Wilt stow it in behind, by way of luggage,
When the Angel comes to coach thee into Glory?
Mind also that the memory of those fair hours
When dinner smoked before thee, or thou usedst
To dress thy nag, or scour thy rusty harness,
And such like noble business be not left behind! —
Ha! self-deceiving bipeds, is it not enough
The carcass should at every step oppress,
Imprison you; that toothache, headache,
Gout, — who knows what all, — at every moment,
Degrades the god of Earth into a beast;
But you would take this villanous mingle,
The coarser dross of all the elements,
Which, by the Light-beam from on high that visits
And dwells in it, but baser shows its baseness, —
Take this, and all the freaks which, bubble-like,
Spring forth o' th' blood, and which by such fair names
You call, — along with you into your Heaven? —
Well, be it so! much good may 't —
[*As his eye, by chance, lights on Gottfried, who meanwhile has fallen asleep.*
— Sound already?
There is a race for whom all serves as — pillow,
Even rattling chains are but a lullaby.

This Robert d'Heredon, whose preaching has here such a narcotic virtue, is destined ultimately for a higher office than to rattle his chains by way of lullaby. He is ejected from the Order; not, however, with disgrace and in anger, but in sad feeling of necessity, and with tears and blessings from his brethren; and the messenger of the *Valley*, a strange, ambiguous, little, sylph-like maiden, gives him obscure encouragement, before his departure, to possess his soul in patience; seeing, if he can learn the grand secret of Renunciation, his course is not ended, but only opening on a fairer scene. Robert knows not well what to make of this; but sails for his native Hebrides, in darkness and contrition, as one who can do no other.

In the end of the Second Part, which is represented as divided from the First by an interval of seven years, Robert is again summoned forth; and the whole surprising secret of his mission, and of the *Valley* which appoints it for him, is disclosed. This *Friedenthal* (Valley of Peace) it now appears, is an immense secret association, which has its chief seat somewhere about the roots of Mount Carmel, if we mistake not; but, comprehending in its ramifications the best heads and hearts of every country, extends over the whole civilized world; and has, in particular, a strong body of adherents in Paris, and indeed a subterraneous but seemingly very commodious suite of rooms under the Carmelite Monastery of that city. Here sit in solemn conclave the heads of the Establishment; directing from their lodge, in deepest concealment, the principal movements of the kingdom: for William of Paris, archbishop of Sens, being of their number, the king and his other ministers, fancying within themselves the utmost freedom of action, are nothing more than puppets in the hands of this all-powerful Brotherhood, which watches, like a sort of Fate, over the interests of mankind, and, by mysterious agencies, forwards, we suppose, "the cause of civil and religious liberty all over the world." It is they that have doomed the Templars; and, without malice or pity, are sending their leaders to the dungeon and the stake. That knightly Order, once a favorite minister of good, has now degenerated from its purity, and come to mistake its purpose, having taken up politics and a sort of radical reform; and so must now be broken and reshaped, like a worn implement, which can no longer do its appointed work.

Such a magnificent "Society for the Suppression of Vice" may well be supposed to walk by the most philosophical principles. These *Friedenthalers*, in fact, profess to be a sort of Invisible Church; preserving in vestal purity the sacred fire of religion, which burns with more or less fuliginous admixture in the worship of every people, but only with its clear sidereal lustre in the recesses of the *Valley*. They are Bramins on the Ganges, Bonzes on the Hoang-ho, Monks on the Seine. They addict themselves to contemplation and the subtlest study; have penetrated far into the mysteries of spiritual and physical nature; they command the deep-hidden virtues of plant and mineral; and their sages can discriminate the eye of the mind from its sensual instruments, and behold, without type or material embodiment, the essence of Being. Their activity is all-comprehending and unerringly calculated: they rule over the world by the authority of wisdom over ignorance.

In the Fifth Act of the Second Part, we are at length, after many a hint and significant note of preparation, introduced to the privacies of this philosophical *Santa Hermandad.* A strange Delphic cave this of theirs, under the very pavements of Paris! There are brazen folding-doors, and concealed voices, and sphinxes, and naphtha-lamps, and all manner of wondrous furniture. It seems, moreover, to be a sort of gala evening with them; for the "Old Man of Carmel, in eremite garb, with a long beard reaching to his girdle," is for a moment discovered "reading in a deep monotonous voice." The "Strong Ones," meanwhile, are out in quest of Robert d'Heredon; who, by cunning practices, has been enticed from his Hebridean solitude, in the hope of saving Molay, and is even now to be initiated, and equipped for his task. After a due allowance of pompous ceremonial, Robert is at last ushered in, or rather dragged in; for it appears that he has made a stout debate, not submitting to the customary form of being *ducked*, — an essential preliminary, it would seem, — till compelled by the direst necessity. He is in a truly Highland anger, as is natural: but by various manipulations and solacements, he is reduced to reason again; finding, indeed, the fruitlessness of anything else; for when lance and sword and free space are given him, and he makes a thrust at Adam of Valincourt, the master of the ceremonies, it is to no purpose: the old man has a torpedo quality in him, which benumbs the stoutest arm; and no death issues from the baffled sword-point, but only a small spark of electric fire. With his Scottish prudence, Robert, under these circumstances, cannot but perceive that quietness is best. The people hand him, in succession, the "Cup of Strength," the

"Cup of Beauty," and the "Cup of Wisdom;" liquors brewed, if we may judge from their effects, with the highest stretch of Rosicrucian art; and which must have gone far to disgust Robert d'Heredon with his natural *usquebaugh,* however excellent, had that fierce drink been in use then. He rages in a fine frenzy; dies away in raptures; and then, at last, "considers what he wanted and what he wants." Now is the time for Adam of Valincourt to strike in with an interminable exposition of the "objects of the society." To not unwilling but still cautious ears he unbosoms himself, in mystic wise, with extreme copiousness; turning aside objections like a veteran disputant, and leading his apt and courageous pupil, by signs and wonders, as well as by logic, deeper and deeper into the secrets of theosophic and thaumaturgic science. A little glimpse of this our readers may share with us; though we fear the allegory will seem to most of them but a hollow nut. Nevertheless, it is an allegory — of its sort; and we can profess to have translated with entire fidelity: —

. . . . .

ADAM. Thy riddle by a second will be solved.
[*He leads him to the Sphinx.*
Behold this Sphinx! Half-beast, half-angel, both
Combined in one, it is an emblem to thee
Of th' ancient Mother, Nature, herself a riddle,
And only by a deeper to be master'd.
Eternal Clearness in th' eternal Ferment:
This is the riddle of Existence: — read it, —
Propose that other to her, and she serves thee!
[*The door on the right-hand opens, and, in the space behind it, appears, as before, the Old Man of Carmel, sitting at a Table, and reading in a large Volume. Three deep strokes of a Bell are heard.*

OLD MAN OF CARMEL [*reading with a loud but still monotonous voice*]. "And when the Lord saw Phosphoros" —

ROBERT [*interrupting him*]. Ha! Again
A story as of Baffometus?

ADAM. Not so.
That tale of theirs was but some poor distortion
Of th' outmost image of our Sanctuary. —

Keep silence here; and see thou interrupt not,
By too bold cavilling, this mystery.
Old Man [*reading*].
"And when the Lord saw Phosphoros his pride,
Being wroth thereat, he cast him forth,
And shut him in a prison called Life;
And gave him for a Garment earth and water,
And bound him straitly in four Azure Chains,
And pour'd for him the bitter Cup of Fire.
The Lord moreover spake: Because thou hast forgotten
My will, I yield thee to the Element,
And thou shalt be his slave, and have no longer
Remembrance of thy Birthplace or my Name.
And sithence thou hast sinn'd against me by
Thy prideful Thought of being One and Somewhat,
I leave with thee that Thought to be thy whip,
And this thy weakness for a Bit and Bridle;
Till once a Saviour from the Waters rise,
Who shall again baptize thee in my bosom,
That so thou mayst be Nought and All.
"And when the Lord had spoken, he drew back
As in a mighty rushing; and the Element
Rose up round Phosphoros, and tower'd itself
Aloft to Heav'n; and he lay stunn'd beneath it.
"But when his first-born Sister saw his pain,
Her heart was full of sorrow, and she turn'd her
To the Lord; and with veil'd face, thus spake Mylitta:[1]
Pity my Brother, and let me console him!
"Then did the Lord in pity rend asunder
A little chink in Phosphoros his dungeon,
That so he might behold his Sister's face;
And when she silent peep'd into his Prison,
She left with him a Mirror for his solace;
And when he look'd therein, his earthly Garment
Pressed him less; and, like the gleam of morning,
Some faint remembrance of his Birthplace dawn'd.
"But yet the Azure Chains she could not break,
The bitter Cup of Fire not take from him.
Therefore she pray'd to Mythras, to her Father,

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[1] *Mylitta* in the old Persian mysteries was the name of the Moon; *Mythras* that of the Sun.

To save his youngest-born; and Mythras went
Up to the footstool of the Lord, and said:
Take pity on my Son! — Then said the Lord:
Have I not sent Mylitta that he may
Behold his Birthplace? — Wherefore Mythras answer'd:
What profits it? The Chains she cannot break,
The bitter Cup of Fire not take from him.
So will I, said the Lord, the Salt be given him.
That so the bitter Cup of Fire be softened;
But yet the Azure Chains must lie on him
Till once a Saviour rise from out the Waters. —
And when the Salt was laid on Phosphor's tongue,
The Fire's piercing ceased; but th' Element
Congeal'd the Salt to Ice, and Phosphoros
Lay there benumb'd, and had not power to move.
But Isis saw him, and thus spake the Mother:
"Thou who art Father, Strength and Word and Light!
Shall he my last-born grandchild lie forever
In pain, the down-pressed thrall of his rude Brother?
Then had the Lord compassion, and he sent him
The Herald of the Saviour from the Waters;
The Cup of Fluidness, and in the cup
The drops of Sadness and the drops of Longing:
And then the Ice was thawed, the Fire grew cool,
And Phosphoros again had room to breathe.
But yet the earthy Garment cumber'd him,
The Azure Chains still gall'd, and the Remembrance
Of the Name, the Lord's, which he had lost, was wanting.
"Then the Mother's heart was mov'd with pity,
She beckoned the Son to her, and said:
Thou who art more than I, and yet my nursling,
Put on this Robe of Earth, and show thyself
To fallen Phosphoros bound in the dungeon,
And open him that dungeon's narrow cover.
Then said the Word: It shall be so! and sent
His messenger DISEASE; she broke the roof
Of Phosphor's Prison, so that once again
The Fount of Light he saw: the Element
Was dazzled blind; but Phosphor knew his Father.
And when the Word, in Earth, came to the Prison,
The Element address'd him as his like;
But Phosphoros look'd up to him, and said:

Thou art sent hither to redeem from Sin,
Yet thou art not the Saviour from the Waters. —
Then spake the Word: The Saviour from the Waters
I surely am not; yet when thou hast drunk
The Cup of Fluidness, I will redeem thee.
Then Phosphor drank the Cup of Fluidness,
Of Longing, and of Sadness; and his Garment
Did drop sweet drops; wherewith the Messenger
Of the Word wash'd all his Garment, till its folds
And stiffness vanish'd, and it 'gan grow light.
And when the Prison LIFE she touch'd, straightway
It waxed thin and lucid like to crystal.
But yet the Azure Chains she could not break. —
Then did the Word vouchsafe him the Cup of Faith;
And having drunk it, Phosphoros look'd up,
And saw the Saviour standing in the Waters.
Both hands the Captive stretch'd to grasp that Saviour;
But he fled.
"So Phosphoros was griev'd in heart.
But yet the Word spake comfort, giving him
The Pillow *Patience*, there to lay his head.
And having rested, he rais'd his head, and said:
Wilt thou redeem me from the Prison too?
Then said the Word: Wait yet in peace seven moons.
It may be nine, until thy hour shall come.
And Phosphor answer'd: Lord, thy will be done!
"Which when the mother Isis saw, it griev'd her;
She called the Rainbow up, and said to him:
Go thou and tell the Word that he forgive
The Captive these seven moons! And Rainbow flew
Where he was sent; and as he shook his wings
There dropt from them the *Oil of Purity:*
And this the Word did gather in a Cup,
And cleans'd with it the Sinner's head and bosom.
Then passing forth into his Father's Garden,
He breath'd upon the ground, and there arose
A flow'ret out of it, like milk and rose-bloom;
Which having wetted with the dew of Rapture,
He crown'd therewith the Captive's brow; then grasped him
With his right hand, the Rainbow with the left;
Mylitta likewise with her Mirror came,
And Phosphoros looked into it, and saw

Writ on the Azure of Infinity
The long-forgotten NAME, and the REMEMBRANCE
Of HIS BIRTHPLACE, gleaming as in light of gold.
"Then fell there as if scales from Phosphor's eyes;
He left the Thought of being One and Somewhat,
His nature melted in the mighty All;
Like sighings from above came balmy healing,
So that his heart for very bliss was bursting.
For Chains and Garment cumber'd him no more:
The Garment he had changed to royal purple,
And of his chains were fashion'd glancing jewels.
"True, still the Saviour from the Waters tarried;
Yet came the Spirit over him; the Lord
Turn'd towards him a gracious countenance,
And Isis held him in her mother-arms.
"This is the last of the Evangels."
[*The door closes, and again conceals the Old Man of Carmel.*

The purport of this enigma Robert confesses that he does not "wholly understand;" an admission in which, we suspect, most of our readers, and the Old Man of Carmel himself, were he candid, might be inclined to agree with him. Sometimes, in the deeper consideration which translators are bound to bestow on such extravagances, we have fancied we could discern in this apologue some glimmerings of meaning, scattered here and there like weak lamps in the darkness; not enough to interpret the riddle, but to show that by possibility it might have an interpretation, — was a typical vision, with a certain degree of significance in the wild mind of the poet, not an inane fever-dream. Might not Phosphoros, for example, indicate generally the spiritual essence of man, and this story be an emblem of his history? He longs to be "One and Somewhat;" that is, he labors under the very common complaint of *egoism;* cannot, in the grandeur of Beauty and Virtue, forget his own so beautiful and virtuous *Self;* but, amid the glories of the majestic All, is still haunted and blinded by some shadow of his own little *Me.* For this reason he is punished; imprisoned in the "Element" (of a material body), and has the "four Azure Chains" (the four principles of mat ter) bound round him; so that he can neither think nor act, except in a foreign medium, and under conditions that encumber and confuse him. The "Cup of Fire" is given him; perhaps, the rude, barbarous passion and cruelty natural to all uncultivated tribes? But, at length, he beholds the "Moon;" begins to have some sight and love of material Nature; and, looking into her "Mirror," forms to himself, under gross emblems, a theogony and sort of mythologic poetry; in which, if he still cannot behold the "Name," and has forgotten his own "Birthplace," both of which are blotted out and hidden by the "Element," he finds some spiritual solace, and breathes more freely. Still, however, the "Cup of Fire" tortures him; till the "Salt" (intellectual culture?) is vouchsafed; which, indeed, calms the raging of that furious bloodthirstiness and warlike strife, but leaves him, as mere culture of the understanding may be supposed to do, frozen into irreligion and moral inactivity, and farther from the "Name" and his "Own Original" than ever. Then, is the "Cup of Fluidness" a more merciful disposition? and intended, with "the Drops of Sadness and the Drops of Longing," to shadow forth that woe-struck, desolate, yet softer and devouter state in which mankind displayed itself at the coming of the "Word," at the first promulgation of the Christian religion? Is the "Rainbow" the modern poetry of Europe, the Chivalry, the new form of Stoicism, the whole *romantic* feeling of these later days? But who or what the "*Heiland aus den Wassern* (Saviour from the Waters)" may be, we need not hide our entire ignorance; this being apparently a secret of the *Valley*, which Robert d'Heredon, and Werner, and men of like gifts, are in due time to show the world, but unhappily have not yet succeeded in bringing to light. Perhaps, indeed, our whole interpretation may be thought little better than lost labor; a reading of what was only scrawled and flourished, not written; a shaping of gay castles and metallic palaces from the sunset clouds, which, though mountain-like, and purple and golden of hue, and towered together as if by Cyclopean arms, are but dyed vapor.

Adam of Valincourt continues his exposition in the most liberal way; but, through many pages of metrical lecturing, he does little to satisfy us. What was more to his purpose, he partly succeeds in satisfying Robert d'Heredon; who, after due preparation, — Molay being burnt like a martyr, under the most promising omens, and the Pope and the King of France struck dead, or nearly so, — sets out to found the order of St. Andrew in his own country, that of Calatrava in Spain, and other knightly missions of the *Heiland aus den Wassern* elsewhere; and thus, to the great satisfaction of all parties, the *Sons of the Valley* terminates, "positively for the last time."

Our reader may have already convinced himself that in this strange phantasmagoria there are not wanting indications of a very high poetic talent. We see a mind of great depth, if not of sufficient strength; struggling with objects which, though it cannot master them, are essentially of richest significance. Had the writer only kept his piece till the ninth year; meditating it with true diligence and unwearied will! But the weak Werner was not a man for such things: he must reap the harvest on the morrow after seed-day, and so stands before us at last as a man capable of much, only not of bringing aught to perfection.

Of his natural dramatic genius, this work, ill-concocted as it is, affords no unfavorable specimen; and may, indeed, have justified expectations which were never realized. It is true, he cannot yet give form and animation to a character, in the genuine poetic sense; we do not *see* any of his *dramatis personæ,* but only hear of them: yet, in some cases, his endeavor, though imperfect, is by no means abortive; and here, for instance, Jacques Molay, Philip Adalbert, Hugo, and the like, though not living men, have still as much life as many a buff-and-scarlet Sebastian or Barbarossa, whom we find swaggering, for years, with acceptance, on the boards. Of his spiritual beings, whom in most of his Plays he introduces too profusely, we cannot speak in commendation: they are of a mongrel nature, neither rightly dead nor alive; in fact, they sometimes glide about like real though rather singular mortals, through the whole piece; and only vanish as ghosts in the fifth act. But, on the other hand, in contriving theatrical incidents and sentiments; in scenic shows, and all manner of gorgeous, frightful, or astonishing machinery, Werner exhibits a copious invention, and strong though untutored feeling. Doubtless, it is all crude enough; all illuminated by an impure, barbaric splendor; not the soft, peaceful brightness of sunlight, but the red, resinous glare of playhouse torches. Werner, however, was still young; and had he been of a right spirit, all that was impure and crude might in time have become ripe and clear; and a poet of no ordinary excellence would have been moulded out of him.

But, as matters stood, this was by no means the thing Werner had most at heart. It is not the degree of poetic talent manifested in the *Sons of the Valley* that he prizes, but the religious truth shadowed forth in it. To judge from the parables of Baffometus and Phosphoros, our readers may be disposed to hold his revelations on this subject rather cheap. Nevertheless, taking up the character of *Vates* in its widest sense, Werner earnestly desires not only to be a poet, but a prophet; and, indeed, looks upon his merits in the former province as altogether subservient to his higher purposes in the latter. We have a series of the most confused and long-winded letters to Hitzig, who had now removed to Berlin; setting forth, with a singular simplicity, the mighty projects Werner was cherishing on this head. He thinks that there ought to be a new Creed promulgated, a new Body of Religionists established; and that, for this purpose, not writing, but actual preaching, can avail. He detests common Protestantism, under which he seems to mean a sort of Socinianism, or diluted French Infidelity: he talks of Jacob Böhme, and Luther, and Schleiermacher, and a new Trinity of "Art, Religion and Love." All this should be sounded in the ears of men, and in a loud voice, that so their torpid slumber, the harbinger of spiritual death, may be driven away. With the utmost gravity, he commissions his correspondent to wait upon Schlegel, Tieck and others of a like spirit, and see whether they will not join him. For his own share in the matter, he is totally indifferent; will serve in the meanest capacity, and rejoice with his whole heart, if, in zeal and ability as poets and preachers, not some only, but every one should infinitely outstrip him. We suppose he had dropped the thought of being "One and Somewhat;" and now wished, rapt away by this divine purpose, to be "Nought and All."

On the *Heiland aus den Wassern* this correspondence throws no farther light: what the new Creed specially was which Werner felt so eager to plant and propagate, we nowhere learn with any distinctness. Probably he might himself have been rather at a loss to explain it in brief compass. His theogony, we suspect, was still very much *in posse;* and perhaps only the moral part of this system could stand before him with some degree of clearness. On this latter point, indeed, he is determined enough; well assured of his dogmas, and apparently waiting but for some proper vehicle in which to convey them to the minds of men. His fundamental principle of morals we have seen in part already: it does not exclusively or primarily belong to himself; being little more than that high tenet of entire Self-forgetfulness, that "merging of the *Me* in the *Idea;*" a principle which reigns both in Stoical and Christian ethics, and is at this day common, in theory, among all German philosophers, especially of the Transcendental class. Werner has adopted this principle with his whole heart and his whole soul, as the indispensable condition of all Virtue. He believes it, we should say, intensely, and without compromise, exaggerating rather than softening or concealing its peculiarities. He will not have Happiness, under any form, to be the real or chief end of man: this is but love of enjoyment, disguise it as we like; a more complex and sometimes more respectable species of hunger, he would say; to be admitted as an indestructible element in human nature, but nowise to be recognized as the highest; on the contrary, to be resisted and incessantly warred with, till it become obedient to love of God, which is only, in the truest sense, love of Goodness, and the germ of which lies deep in the inmost nature of man; of authority superior to all sensitive impulses; forming, in fact, the grand law of his being, as subjection to it forms the first and last condition of spiritual health. He thinks that to propose a reward for virtue is to render virtue impossible. He warmly seconds Schleiermacher in declaring that even the hope of Immortality is a consideration unfit to be introduced into religion, and tending only to pervert it, and impair its sacredness. Strange as this may seem, Werner is firmly convinced of its importance; and has even enforced it specifically in a passage of his *Söhne des Thals*, which he is at the pains to cite and expound in his correspondence with Hitzig. Here is another fraction of that wondrous dialogue between Robert d'Heredon and Adam of Valincourt, in the cavern of the *Valley:* —

. . . . .

Robert. And Death, — so dawns it on me, — Death perhaps,
The doom that leaves nought of this *Me* remaining,
May be perhaps the Symbol of that Self-denial, —
Perhaps still more, — perhaps, — I have it, friend! —
That cripplish Immortality, — think'st not? —
Which but spins forth our paltry *Me*, so thin
And pitiful, into Infinitude,
That too must *die?* — This shallow Self of ours,
We are not nail'd to it eternally?
We can, we must be free of it, and then
Uncumbered wanton in the Force of All!
Adam [*calling joyfully into the interior of the Cavern*].
Brethren, he has renounced! Himself has found it!
Oh, praised be Light! He sees! The North is sav'd!
Concealed Voices *of the Old Men of the Valley.*
Hail and joy to thee, thou Strong One:
Force to thee from above, and Light!
Complete, — complete the work!
Adam [*embracing Robert*].
Come to my heart! — &c. &c.

Such was the spirit of that new Faith, which, symbolized under mythuses of Baffometus and Phosphoros, and "Saviours from the Waters," and "Trinities of Art, Religion and Love," and to be preached abroad by the aid of Schleiermacher, and what was then called the *New Poetical School*, Werner seriously purposed, like another Luther, to cast forth, as good seed, among the ruins of decayed and down-trodden

Protestantism! Whether Hitzig was still young enough to attempt executing his commission, and applying to Schlegel and Tieck for help; and if so, in what gestures of speechless astonishment, or what peals of inextinguishable laughter they answered him, we are not informed. One thing, however, is clear: that a man with so unbridled an imagination, joined to so weak an understanding and so broken a volition; who had plunged so deep in Theosophy, and still hovered so near the surface in all practical knowledge of men and their affairs; who, shattered and degraded in his own private character, could meditate such apostolic enterprises, — was a man likely, if he lived long, to play fantastic tricks in abundance; and, at least in his religious history, to set the world a-wondering. Conversion, not to Popery, but, if it so chanced, to Braminism, was a thing nowise to be thought impossible.

Nevertheless, let his missionary zeal have justice from us. It does seem to have been grounded on no wicked or even illaudable motive: to all appearance, he not only believed what he professed, but thought it of the highest moment that others should believe it. And if the proselytizing spirit, which dwells in all men, be allowed exercise even when it only assaults what it reckons Errors, still more should this be so when it proclaims what it reckons Truth, and fancies itself not taking from us what in our eyes may be good, but adding thereto what is better.

Meanwhile, Werner was not so absorbed in spiritual schemes, that he altogether overlooked his own merely temporal comfort. In contempt of former failures, he was now courting for himself a third wife, "a young Poless of the highest personal attractions;" and this under difficulties which would have appalled an ordinary wooer: for the two had no language in common; he not understanding three words of Polish, she not one of German. Nevertheless, nothing daunted by this circumstance, nay perhaps discerning in it an assurance against many a sorrowful curtain-lecture, he prosecuted his suit, we suppose by signs and dumb-show, with such ardor, that he quite gained the fair mute; wedded her in 1801; and soon after, in her company, quitted Warsaw for Königsberg, where the helpless state of his mother required immediate attention. It is from Königsberg that most of his missionary epistles to Hitzig are written; the latter, as we have hinted before, being now stationed, by his official appointment, in Berlin. The sad duty of watching over his crazed, forsaken and dying mother, Werner appears to have discharged with true filial assiduity: for three years she lingered in the most painful state, under his nursing; and her death, in 1804, seems notwithstanding to have filled him with the deepest sorrow. This is an extract of his letter to Hitzig on that mournful occasion: —

"I know not whether thou hast heard that on the 24th of February (the same day when our excellent Mnioch died in Warsaw), my mother departed here, in my arms. My Friend! God knocks with an iron hammer at our hearts; and we are duller than stone, if we do not feel it; and madder than mad, if we think it shame to cast ourselves into the dust before the All-powerful, and let our whole so highly miserable Self be annihilated in the sentiment of His infinite greatness and long-suffering. I wish I had words to paint how inexpressibly pitiful my *Söhne des Thals* appeared to me in that hour, when, after eighteen years of neglect, I again went to partake in the Communion! This death of my mother — the pure royal poet-and-martyr spirit, who for eight years had lain continually on a sick-bed, and suffered unspeakable things — affected me (much as, for her sake and my own, I could not but wish it) with altogether agonizing feelings. Ah, Friend, how heavy do my youthful faults lie on me! How much would I give to have my mother — (though both I and my wife have of late times lived wholly for her, and had much to endure on her account) — how much would I give to have her back to me but for one week, that I might disburden my heavy-laden heart with tears of repentance! My beloved Friend, give thou no grief to thy parents: ah, no earthly voice can awaken the dead! God and Parents, that is the first concern; *all* else is secondary."

This affection for his mother forms, as it were, a little island of light and verdure in Werner's history, where, amid so much that is dark and desolate, one feels it pleasant to linger. Here was at least one duty, perhaps indeed the only one, which, in a wayward wasted life, he discharged with fidelity; from his conduct towards this one hapless being, we may perhaps still learn that his heart, however perverted by circumstances, was not incapable of true, disinterested love. A rich heart by Nature; but unwisely squandering its riches, and attaining to a pure union only with this one heart; for it seems doubtful whether he ever loved another! His poor mother, while alive, was the haven of all his earthly voyagings; and, in after years, from amid far scenes and crushing perplexities, he often looks back to her grave with a feeling to which all bosoms must respond.[1] The date of her decease became a memorable era in his mind; as may appear from the title which he gave long afterwards to one of his most popular and tragical productions, *Die Vier-und-zwanzigste Februar* (The Twenty-fourth of February).

After this event, which left him in possession of a small but competent fortune, Werner returned with his wife to his post at Warsaw. By this time, Hitzig too had been sent back, and to a higher post: he was now married likewise; and the two wives, he says, soon became as intimate as their husbands. In a little while Hoffmann joined them; a colleague in Hitzig's office, and by him ere long introduced to Werner, and the other circle of Prussian men of law; who, in this foreign capital, formed each other's chief society; and, of course, clave to one another more closely than they might have done elsewhere. Hoffmann does not seem to have loved Werner; as, indeed, he was at all times rather shy in his attachments; and to his quick eye, and more rigid fastidious feeling, the lofty theory and low selfish practice, the general diffuseness, nay incoherence of character, the pedantry and solemn affectation, too visible in the man, could nowise be hidden. Nevertheless, he feels and acknowledges the frequent charm of his conversation : for Werner many times could be frank and simple; and the true humor and abandonment with which he often launched forth into bland satire on his friends, and still oftener on himself, atoned for many of his whims and weaknesses. Probably the two could not have lived together by themselves : but in a circle of common men, where these touchy elements were attempered by a fair addition of wholesome insensibilities and formalities, they even relished one another; and, indeed, the whole social union seems to have stood on no undesirable footing. For the rest, Warsaw itself was, at this time, a gay, picturesque and stirring city; full of resources for spending life in pleasant occupation, either wisely or unwisely.[1]

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[1] See, for example, the Preface to his *Mutter der Makkabäer*, written at Vienna, in 1819. The tone of still but deep and heartfelt sadness which runs through the whole of this piece cannot be communicated in extracts. We quote only a half stanza, which, except in prose, we shall not venture to translate: —

"Ich, dem der Liebe Kosen
Und alle Freudenrosen
Beym ersten Schaufeltosen
Am Muttergrab' entflohn.

I, for whom the caresses of love and all roses of joy withered away as the first shovel with its mould sounded on the coffin of my mother."

It was here that, in 1805, Werner's *Kreuz an der Ostsee* (Cross on the Baltic) was written : a sort of half-operatic performance, for which Hoffmann, who to his gifts as a writer added perhaps still higher attainments both as a musician and a painter, composed the accompaniment. He complains that in this matter Werner was very ill to please. A ridiculous scene, at the first reading of the piece, the same shrewd wag has recorded in his *Serapions-Brüder:* Hitzig assures us that it is literally true, and that Hoffmann himself was the main actor in the business.

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[1] Hitzig has thus described the first aspect it presented to Hoffmann : "Streets of stately breadth, formed of palaces in the finest Italian style, and wooden huts which threatened every moment to rush down over the heads of their inmates; in these edifices, Asiatic pomp combined in strange union with Greenland squalor. An ever-moving population, forming the sharpest contrasts, as in a perpetual masquerade : long-bearded Jews; monks in the garb of every order; here veiled and deeply shrouded nuns of strictest discipline, walking self-secluded and apart; there flights of young Polesses, in silk mantles of the brightest colors, talking and promenading over broad squares. The venerable ancient Polish noble, with moustaches, caftan, girdle, sabre, and red or yellow boots; the new generation equipt to the utmost pitch as Parisian *Incroyables;* with Turks, Greeks, Russians, Italians, Frenchmen, in ever-changing throng. Add to this a police of inconceivable tolerance, disturbing no popular sport; so that little puppet-theatres, apes, camels, dancing-bears, practised incessantly in open spaces and streets; while the most elegant equipages, and the poorest pedestrian bearers of burden, stood gazing at them. Farther, a theatre in the national language; a good French company; an Italian opera; German players of at least a very passable sort; masked balls on a quite original but highly entertaining plan; places for pleasure-excursions all round the city," &c. &c. — Hoffmann's *Leben und Nachlass,* b. i. s. 287.

"Our Poet had invited a few friends, to read to them, in manuscript, his *Kreuz an der Ostsee,* of which they already knew some fragments that had raised their expectations to the highest stretch. Planted, as usual, in the middle of the circle, at a little miniature table, on which two clear lights, stuck in high candlesticks, were burning, sat the Poet: he had drawn the manuscript from his breast; the huge snuff-box, the blue-checked handkerchief, aptly reminding you of Baltic muslin, as in use for petticoats and other indispensable things, lay arranged in order before him. — Deep silence on all sides! — Not a breath heard! — The Poet cuts one of those unparalleled, ever-memorable, altogether indescribable faces you have seen in him, and begins. — Now you recollect, at the rising of the curtain, the Prussians are assembled on the coast of the Baltic, fishing amber, and commence by calling on the god who presides over this vocation. — So begins:

'Bangputtis! Bangputtis! Bangputtis!'

— Brief pause! Incipient stare in the audience! — and from a fellow in the corner comes a small clear voice: 'My dearest, most valued friend! my best of poets! if thy whole dear opera is written in that cursed language, no soul of us knows a syllable of it; and I beg, in the Devil's name, thou wouldst have the goodness to translate it first!'"[1]

Of this *Kreuz an der Ostsee* our limits will permit us to say but little. It is still a fragment; the Second Part, which was often promised, and, we believe, partly written, having never yet been published. In some respects, it appears to us the best of Werner's dramas: there is a decisive coherence in the plot, such as we seldom find with him; and a firmness, a rugged nervous brevity in the dialogue, which is equally rare. Here, too, the mystic dreamy agencies, which, as in most of his pieces, he has interwoven with the action, harmonize more than usually with the spirit of the whole. It is a wild subject, and this helps to give it a corresponding wildness of locality. The first planting of Christianity among the Prussians by the Teutonic Knights leads us back of itself into dim ages of antiquity, of superstitious barbarism, and stern apostolic zeal: it is a scene hanging, as it were, in half-ghastly *chiaroscuro*, on a ground of primeval Night: where the Cross and St. Adalbert come in contact with the Sacred Oak and the Idols of Romova, we are not surprised that spectral shapes peer forth on us from the gloom.

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[1] Hoffmann's *Serapions-Brüder,* b. iv. s. 240.

In constructing and depicting of characters, Werner, indeed, is still little better than a mannerist: his persons, differing in external figure, differ too slightly in inward nature; and no one of them comes forward on us with a rightly visible or living air. Yet, in scenes and incidents, in what may be called the general costume of his subject, he has here attained a really superior excellence. The savage Prussians, with their amber-fishing, their bear-hunting, their bloody idolatry and stormful untutored energy, are brought vividly into view; no less so the Polish Court of Plozk, and the German Crusaders, in their bridal-feasts and battles, as they live and move, here placed on the verge of Heathendom, as it were, the vanguard of Light in conflict with the kingdom of Darkness. The nocturnal assault on Plozk by the Prussians, where the handful of Teutonic Knights is overpowered, but the city saved from ruin by the miraculous interposition of the "Harper," who now proves to be the Spirit of St. Adalbert; this, with the scene which follows it, on the Island of the Vistula, where the dawn slowly breaks over doings of woe and horrid cruelty, but of woe and cruelty atoned for by immortal hope, — belong undoubtedly to Werner's most successful efforts. With much that is questionable, much that is merely common, there are intermingled touches from the true Land of Wonders; indeed, the whole is overspread with a certain dim religious light, in which its many pettinesses and exaggerations are softened into something which at least resembles poetic harmony. We give this drama a high praise, when we say that more than once it has reminded us of Calderon.

The "Cross on the Baltic" had been bespoken by Iffland for the Berlin theatre; but the complex machinery of the piece, the "little flames" springing, at intervals, from the heads of certain characters, and the other supernatural ware with which it is replenished, were found to transcend the capabilities of any merely terrestrial stage. Iffland, the best actor in Germany, was himself a dramatist, and man of talent, but in all points differing from Werner, as a stage-machinist may differ from a man with the *second-sight.* Hoffmann chuckles in secret over the perplexities in which the shrewd prosaic manager and playwright must have found himself, when he came to the "little flame." Nothing remained but to write back a refusal, full of admiration and expostulation: and Iffland wrote one which, says Hoffmann, "passes for a masterpiece of theatrical diplomacy."

In this one respect, at least, Werner's next play was happier, for it actually crossed the "Stygian marsh" of green-room hesitations, and reached, though in a maimed state, the Elysium of the boards; and this to the great joy, as it proved, both of Iffland and all other parties interested. We allude to the *Martin Luther, oder die Weihe der Kraft* (Martin Luther, or the Consecration of Strength), Werner's most popular performance; which came out at Berlin in 1807, and soon spread over all Germany, Catholic as well as Protestant; being acted, it would seem, even in Vienna, to overflowing and delighted audiences.

If instant acceptance, therefore, were a measure of dramatic merit, this play should rank high among that class of works. Nevertheless, to judge from our own impressions, the sober reader of *Martin Luther* will be far from finding in it such excellence. It cannot be named among the best dramas: it is not even the best of Werner's. There is, indeed, much scenic exhibition, many a "fervid sentiment," as the newspapers have it; nay, with all its mixture of coarseness, here and there a glimpse of genuine dramatic inspiration: but, as a whole, the work sorely disappoints us; it is of so loose and mixed a structure, and falls asunder in our thoughts, like the iron and the clay in the Chaldean's Dream. There is an interest, perhaps of no trivial sort, awakened in the First Act; but, unhappily, it goes on declining, till, in the Fifth, an ill-natured critic might almost say, it expires. The story is too wide for Werner's dramatic lens to gather into a focus; besides, the reader brings with him an image of it, too fixed for being so boldly metamorphosed, and too high and august for being ornamented with tinsel and gilt pasteboard. Accordingly, the Diet of Worms, plentifully furnished as it is with sceptres and armorial shields, continues a much grander scene in History than it is here in Fiction. Neither, with regard to the persons of the play, excepting those of Luther and Catharine, the Nun whom he weds, can we find much scope for praise. Nay, our praise even of these two must have many limitations. Catharine, though carefully enough depicted, is, in fact, little more than a common tragedy-queen, with the storminess, the love, and other stage-heroism, which belong prescriptively to that class of dignitaries. With regard to Luther himself, it is evident that Werner has put forth his whole strength in this delineation; and, trying him by common standards, we are far from saying that he has failed. Doubtless it is, in some respects, a significant and even sublime delineation; yet must we ask whether it is Luther, the Luther of History, or even the Luther proper for this drama; and not rather some ideal portraiture of Zacharias Werner himself? Is not this Luther, with his too assiduous flute-playing, his trances of three days, his visions of the Devil (at whom, to the sorrow of the housemaid, he resolutely throws his huge inkbottle), by much too spasmodic and brain-sick a personage? We cannot but question the dramatic beauty, whatever it may be in history, of that three days' trance; the hero must before this have been in want of mere victuals; and there, as he sits deaf and dumb, with his eyes sightless, yet fixed and staring, are we not tempted less to admire, than to send in all haste for some officer of the Humane Society? — Seriously, we cannot but regret that these and other such blemishes had not been avoided, and the character, worked into chasteness and purity, been presented to us in the simple grandeur which essentially belongs to it. For, censure as we may, it were blindness to deny that this figure of Luther has in it features of an austere loveliness, a mild yet awful beauty: undoubtedly a figure rising from the depths of the poet's soul; and, marred as it is with such adhesions, piercing at times into the depths of ours! Among so many poetical sins, it forms the chief redeeming virtue, and truly were almost in itself a sort of atonement.

As for the other characters, they need not detain us long. Of Charles the Fifth, by far the most ambitious, — meant, indeed, as the counterpoise of Luther, — we may say, without hesitation, that he is a failure. An empty Gascon this; bragging of his power, and honor and the like, in a style which Charles, even in his nineteenth year, could never have used. "One God, one Charles," is no speech for an emperor; and, besides, is borrowed from some panegyrist of a Spanish opera-singer. Neither can we fall in with Charles, when he tells us that "he fears nothing, — not even God." We humbly think he must be mistaken. With the old Miners, again, with Hans Luther and his Wife, the Reformer's parents, there is more reason to be satisfied: yet in Werner's hands simplicity is always apt, in such cases, to become too simple; and these honest peasants, like the honest Hugo in the "Sons of the Valley," are *very* garrulous.

The drama of *Martin Luther* is named likewise the *Consecration of Strength;* that is, we suppose, the purifying of this great theologian from all remnants of earthly passion, into a clear heavenly zeal; an operation which is brought about, strangely enough, by two half-ghosts and one whole ghost, — a little fairy girl, Catharine's servant, who impersonates Faith; a little fairy youth, Luther's servant, who represents Art; and the "Spirit of Cotta's wife," an honest housekeeper, but defunct many years before, who stands for Purity. These three supernaturals hover about in very whimsical wise, cultivating flowers, playing on flutes, and singing dirge-like epithalamiums over unsound sleepers: we cannot see how aught of this is to "consecrate strength;" or, indeed, what such jack-o'-lantern personages have in the least to do with so grave a business. If the author intended by such machinery to elevate his subject from the Common, and unite it with the higher region of the Infinite and the Invisible, we cannot think that his contrivance has succeeded, or was worthy to succeed. These half-allegorical, half-corporeal beings yield no contentment anywhere: Abstract Ideas, however they may put on fleshly garments, are a class of characters whom we cannot sympathize with or delight in. Besides, how can this mere embodiment of an allegory be supposed to act on the rugged materials of life, and elevate into ideal grandeur the doings of real men, that live and move amid the actual pressure of worldly things? At best, it can stand but like a *hand in the margin:* it is not *performing* the task proposed, but only telling us that it was meant to be performed. To our feelings, this entire episode runs like straggling bindweed through the whole growth of the piece, not so much uniting as encumbering and choking up what it meets with; in itself, perhaps, a green and rather pretty weed; yet here superfluous, and, like any other weed, deserving only to be altogether cut away.

Our general opinion of *Martin Luther*, it would seem, therefore, corresponds ill with that of the "overflowing and delighted audiences" over all Germany. We believe, however, that now, in its twentieth year, the work may be somewhat more calmly judged of even there. As a classical drama it could never pass with any critic; nor, on the other hand, shall we ourselves deny that, in the lower sphere of a popular spectacle, its attractions are manifold. We find it, what, more or less, we find all Werner's pieces to be, a splendid, sparkling mass; yet not of pure metal, but of many-colored scoria, not unmingled with metal; and must regret, as ever, that it had not been refined in a stronger furnace, and kept in the crucible till the true *silver-gleam*, glancing from it, had shown that the process was complete.

Werner's dramatic popularity could not remain without influence on him, more especially as he was now in the very centre of its brilliancy, having changed his residence from Warsaw to Berlin, some time before his *Weihe der Kraft* was acted, or indeed written. Von Schröter, one of the state-ministers, a man harmonizing with Werner in his "zeal both for religion and freemasonry," had been persuaded by some friends to appoint him his secretary. Werner naturally rejoiced in such promotion; yet, combined with his theatrical success, it perhaps, in the long-run, did him more harm than good. He might now, for the first time, be said to see the busy and influential world with his own eyes: but to draw future instruction from it, or even to guide himself in its present complexities, he was little qualified. He took a shorter method: "he plunged into the vortex of society," says Hitzig, with brief expressiveness; became acquainted, indeed, with Fichte, Johannes Müller, and other excellent men, but united himself also, and with closer partiality, to players, play-lovers, and a long list of jovial, admiring, but highly unprofitable companions. His religious schemes, perhaps rebutted by collision with actual life, lay dormant for the time, or mingled in strange union with wine-vapors, and the "feast of reason and the flow of soul." The result of all this might, in some measure, be foreseen. In eight weeks, for example, Werner had parted with his wife. It was not to be expected, he writes, that she should be happy with him. "I am no bad man," continues he, with considerable candor; "yet a weakling in many respects (for God strengthens me also in several), fretful, capricious, greedy, impure. Thou knowest me! Still, immersed in my fantasies, in my occupation: so that here, what with playhouses, what with social parties, she had no manner of enjoyment with me. *She* is innocent: I too perhaps; for can I pledge myself that I am so?" These repeated divorces of Werner's at length convinced him that he had no talent for managing wives; indeed, we subsequently find him, more than once, arguing in dissuasion of marriage altogether. To our readers one other consideration may occur: astonishment at the state of marriage-law, and the strange footing this "sacrament" must stand on throughout Protestant Germany. For a Christian man, at least not a Mahometan, to leave *three* widows behind him, certainly wears a peculiar aspect. Perhaps it is saying much for German morality, that so absurd a system has not, by the disorders resulting from it, already brought about its own abrogation.

Of Werner's farther proceedings in Berlin, except by implication, we have little notice. After the arrival of the French armies, his secretaryship ceased; and now wifeless and placeless, in the summer of 1807, "he felt himself," he says, "authorized by Fate to indulge his taste for pilgriming." Indulge it accordingly he did; for he wandered to and fro many years, nay we may almost say, to the end of his life, like a perfect Bedouin. The various stages and occurrences of his travels he has himself recorded in a paper, furnished by him for his own *name*, in some Biographical Dictionary. Hitzig quotes great part of it, but it is too long and too meagre for being quoted here. Werner was at Prague, Vienna, Munich, — everywhere received with open arms; "saw at Jena, in December, 1807, for the first time, the most universal and the clearest man of his age (the man whose like no one that has seen him will ever see again), the great, nay only GOETHE; and under his introduction, the pattern of German princes" (the Duke of Weimar); and then, "after three ever-memorable months in this society, beheld at Berlin the triumphant entry of the pattern of European tyrants" (Napoleon). On the summit of the Rigi, at sunrise, he became acquainted with the Crown-Prince, now King, of Bavaria; was by him introduced to the Swiss festival at Interlaken, and to the most "intellectual lady of our time, the Baroness de Staël; and must beg to be credited when, after sufficient individual experience, he can declare, that the heart of this high and noble woman was at least as great as her genius." Coppet, for a while, was his head-quarters; but he went to Paris, to Weimar,[1] again to Switzerland; in short, trudged and hurried hither and thither, inconstant as an *ignis fatuus*, and restless as the Wandering Jew.

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[1] It was here that Hitzig saw him for the last time, in 1809; found admittance, through his means, to a court-festival in honor of Bernadotte; and he still recollects, with gratification, "the lordly spectacle of Goethe and that sovereign standing front to front, engaged in the liveliest conversation."

On his mood of mind during all this period Werner gives us no direct information; but so unquiet an outward life betokens of itself no inward repose; and when we, from other lights, gain a transient glimpse into the wayfarer's thoughts, they seem still more fluctuating than his footsteps. His project of a New Religion was by this time abandoned: Hitzig thinks his closer survey of life at Berlin had taught him the impracticability of such chimeras. Nevertheless, the subject of Religion, in one shape or another, nay of propagating it in new purity by teaching and preaching, had nowise vanished from his meditations. On the contrary, we can perceive that it still formed the master-principle of his soul, "the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night," which guided him, so far as he had any guidance, in the pathless desert of his now solitary, barren and cheerless existence. What his special opinions or prospects on the matter had, at this period, become, we nowhere learn; except, indeed, negatively, — for if he has not yet found the new, he still cordially enough detests the old. All his admiration of Luther cannot reconcile him to modern Lutheranism. This he regards but as another and more hideous impersonation of the Utilitarian spirit of the age, nay as the last triumph of Infidelity, which has now dressed itself in priestly garb, and even mounted the pulpit, to preach, in heavenly symbols, a doctrine which is altogether of the earth. A curious passage from his Preface to the *Cross on the Baltic* we may quote, by way of illustration. After speaking of St. Adalbert's miracles, and how his body, when purchased from the heathen for its weight in gold, became light as gossamer, he proceeds: —

"Though these things may be justly doubted; yet *one* miracle cannot be denied him, the miracle, namely, that after his death he has extorted from this Spirit of Protestantism against Strength in general, — which now replaces the old heathen and catholic Spirit of Persecution, and weighs almost as much as Adalbert's body, — the admission, that he knew what he wanted; was what he wished to be; was so wholly; and therefore must have been a man at all points diametrically opposite both to that Protestantism, and to the culture of our day." In a Note, he adds: "There is another Protestantism, however, which constitutes in Conduct what Art is in Speculation, and which I reverence so highly, that I even place it above Art, as Conduct is above Speculation at all times. But in this, St. Adalbert and St. Luther are — colleagues: and if God, which I daily pray for, should awaken Luther to us *before* the Last Day, the *first* task he would find, in respect of that degenerate and spurious Protestantism, would be, in his somewhat rugged manner, to — *protest* against it."

A similar, or perhaps still more reckless temper, is to be traced elsewhere, in passages of a gay, as well as grave character. This is the conclusion of a letter from Vienna, in 1807:

"We have Tragedies here which contain so many edifying maxims, that you might use them instead of *Jesus Sirach*, and have them read from beginning to end in the Berlin Sunday-Schools. Comedies, likewise, absolutely bursting with household felicity and nobleness of mind. The genuine Kasperl is dead, and Schikander has gone his ways; but here too Bigotry and Superstition are attacked in enlightened Journals with such profit, that the people care less for Popery than even you in Berlin do; and prize, for instance, the *Weihe der Kraft*, which has also been declaimed in Regensburg and Munich to thronging audiences, — chiefly for the multitude of liberal Protestant opinions therein brought to light; and regard the author, all his struggling to the contrary unheeded, as a secret *Illuminatus*, or at worst an amiable Enthusiast. In a word, Vienna is determined, without loss of time, to overtake Berlin in the career of improvement; and when I recollect that Berlin, on her side, carries Porst's *Hymn-book* with her, in her reticule, to the shows in the *Thiergarten;* and that the ray of Christiano-catholico-platonic Faith pierces deeper and deeper into your (already by nature very deep) Privy-councillor Ma'm'selle, — I almost fancy that Germany is one great madhouse; and could find in my heart to pack up my goods, and set off for Italy, to-morrow morning; — not, indeed, that I might work there, where follies enough are to be had too; but that, amid ruins and flowers, I might forget all things, and myself in the first place."[1]

To Italy accordingly he went, though with rather different objects, and not quite so soon as on the morrow. In the course of his wanderings, a munificent ecclesiastical Prince, the Fürst Primas von Dalberg, had settled a yearly pension on him; so that now he felt still more at liberty to go whither he listed. In the course of a second visit to Coppet, and which lasted four months, Madame de Staël encouraged and assisted him to execute his favorite project; he set out, through Turin and Florence, and "on the 9th of December, 1809, saw, for the first time, the Capital of the World!" Of his proceedings here, much as we should desire to have minute details, no information is given in this Narrative; and Hitzig seems to know, by a letter, merely that "he knelt with streaming eyes over the graves of St. Peter and St. Paul." This little phrase says much. Werner appears likewise to have assisted at certain "Spiritual Exercitations (*Geistliche Uebungen*);" a new invention set on foot at Rome for quickening the devotion of the faithful; consisting, so far as we can gather, in a sort of fasting-and-prayer meetings, conducted on the most rigorous principles; the considerable band of devotees being bound over to strict silence, and secluded for several days, with conventual care, from every sort of intercourse with the world. The effect of these Exercitations, Werner elsewhere declares, was edifying to an extreme degree; at parting on the threshold of their holy tabernacle, all the brethren "embraced each other, as if intoxicated with divine joy; and each confessed to the other, that throughout these precious days he had been, as it were, in heaven; and now, strengthened as by a soul-purifying bath, was but loath to venture back into the cold week-day world." The next step from these Tabor-feasts, if, indeed, it had not preceded them, was a decisive one: "On the 19th of April, 1811, Werner had grace given him to return to the Faith of his fathers, the Catholic!"

Here, then, the "crowning mercy" had at length arrived! This passing of the Rubicon determined the whole remainder of Werner's life; which had henceforth the merit at least of entire consistency. He forthwith set about the professional study of Theology; then, being perfected in this, he left Italy in 1813, taking care, however, by the road, "to supplicate, and certainly not in vain, the help of the Gracious Mother at Loretto;" and after due preparation, under the superintendence of his patron, the Prince Archbishop von Dalberg, had himself ordained a Priest at Aschaffenburg, in June, 1814. Next from Aschaffenburg he hastened to Vienna; and there, with all his might, began preaching; his first auditory being the Congress of the Holy Alliance, which had then just begun its venerable sessions. "The novelty and strangeness," he says, "nay originality of his appearance, secured him an extraordinary concourse of hearers." He was, indeed, a man worth hearing and seeing; for his name, noised abroad in many-sounding peals, was filling all Germany from the hut to the palace. This, he thinks, might have affected his head; but he "had a trust in God, which bore him through." Neither did he seem anywise anxious to still this clamor of his judges, least of all to propitiate his detractors: for already, before arriving at Vienna, he had published, as a pendant to his *Martin Luther, or the Consecration of Strength*, a Pamphlet in doggerel metre, entitled the *Consecration of Weakness*, wherein he proclaims himself to the whole world as an honest seeker and finder of truth, and takes occasion to revoke his old "Trinity" of art, religion and love; love having now turned out to be a dangerous ingredient in such mixtures. The writing of this *Weihe der Unkraft* was reckoned by many a bold but injudicious measure, — a throwing down of the gauntlet when the lists were full of tumultuous foes, and the knight was but weak, and his cause, at best, of the most questionable sort. To reports, and calumnies, and criticisms, and vituperations, there was no limit.

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[1] *Lebens-Abriss*, s. 70.

What remains of this strange eventful history may be summed up in few words. Werner accepted no special charge in the Church; but continued a private and secular Priest; preaching diligently, but only where he himself saw good; oftenest at Vienna, but in summer over all parts of Austria, in Styria, Carinthia, and even Venice. Everywhere, he says, the opinions of his hearers were "violently divided." At one time, he thought of becoming Monk, and had actually entered on a sort of novitiate; but he quitted the establishment rather suddenly, and, as he is reported to have said, "for reasons known only to God and himself." By degrees, his health grew very weak: yet he still labored hard both in public and private; writing or revising poems, devotional or dramatic; preaching, and officiating as father-confessor, in which last capacity he is said to have been in great request. Of his poetical productions during this period, there is none of any moment known to us, except the *Mother of the Maccabees* (1819); a tragedy of careful structure, and apparently in high favor with the author, but which, notwithstanding, need not detain us long. In our view, it is the worst of all his pieces; a pale, bloodless, indeed quite ghost-like affair; for a cold breath as from a sepulchre chills the heart in perusing it: there is no passion or interest, but a certain woe-struck martyr zeal, or rather frenzy, and this not so much storming as shrieking; not loud and resolute, but shrill, hysterical and bleared with ineffectual tears. To read it may well sadden us: it is a convulsive fit, whose uncontrollable writhings indicate, not strength, but the last decay of that.[1]

Werner was, in fact, drawing to his latter end: his health had long been ruined; especially of later years, he had suffered much from disorders of the lungs. In 1817, he was thought to be dangerously ill; and afterwards, in 1822, when a journey to the Baths partly restored him; though he himself still felt that his term was near, and spoke and acted like a man that was shortly to depart. In January, 1823, he was evidently dying: his affairs he had already settled; much of his time he spent in prayer; was constantly cheerful, at intervals even gay. "His death," says Hitzig, "was especially mild. On the eleventh day of his disorder, he felt himself, particularly towards evening, as if altogether light and well; so that he would hardly consent to have any one to watch with him. The servant whose turn it was did watch, however; he had sat down by the bedside between two and three next morning (the 17th), and continued there a considerable while, in the belief that his patient was asleep. Surprised, however, that no breathing was to be heard, he hastily aroused the household, and it was found that Werner had already passed away."

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[1] Of his *Attila* (1808), his *Vier-und-zwanzigste Februar* (1809), his *Cunegunde* (1814), and various other pieces written in his wanderings, we have not room to speak. It is the less necessary, as the *Attila* and *Twenty-fourth of February*, by much the best of these, have already been forcibly, and on the whole fairly, characterized by Madame de Staël. Of the last-named little work we might say, with double emphasis, *Nec pueros coram populo Medea trucidet:* it has a deep and genuine tragic interest, were it not so painfully protracted into the regions of pure horror. Werner's *Sermons*, his *Hymns*, his *Preface to Thomas à Kempis*, &c. are entirely unknown to us.

In imitation, it is thought, of Lipsius, he bequeathed his Pen to the treasury of the Virgin at Mariazell, "as a chief instrument of his aberrations, his sins and his repentance." He was honorably interred at Enzersdorf on the Hill; where a simple inscription, composed by himself, begs the wanderer to "pray charitably for his poor soul;" and expresses a trembling hope that, as to Mary Magdalen, "because she loved much," so to him also "much may be forgiven."

We have thus, in hurried movement, travelled over Zacharias Werner's Life and Works; noting down from the former such particulars as seemed most characteristic; and gleaning from the latter some more curious passages, less indeed with a view to their intrinsic excellence, than to their fitness for illustrating the man. These scattered indications we must now leave our readers to interpret each for himself: each will adjust them into that combination which shall best harmonize with his own way of thought. As a writer, Werner's character will occasion little difficulty. A richly gifted nature; but never wisely guided, or resolutely applied; a loving heart; an intellect subtle and inquisitive, if not always clear and strong; a gorgeous, deep and bold imagination; a true, nay keen and burning sympathy with all high, all tender and holy things: here lay the main elements of no common poet; save only that one was still wanting, — the force to cultivate them, and mould them into pure union. But they have remained uncultivated, disunited, too often struggling in wild disorder: his poetry, like his life, is still not so much an edifice as a quarry. Werner had cast a look into perhaps the very deepest region of the Wonderful; but he had not learned to live there: he was yet no denizen of that mysterious land; and, in his visions, its splendor is strangely mingled and overclouded with the flame or smoke of mere earthly fire. Of his dramas we have already spoken; and with much to praise, found always more to censure. In his rhymed pieces, his shorter, more didactic poems, we are better satisfied: here, in the rude, jolting vehicle of a certain Sternhold-and-Hopkins metre, we often find a strain of true pathos, and a deep though quaint significance. His prose, again, is among the worst known to us: degraded with silliness; diffuse, nay tautological, yet obscure and vague; contorted into endless involutions; a misshapen, lumbering, complected coil, well-nigh inexplicable in its entanglements, and seldom worth the trouble of unravelling. He does not move *through* his subject, and arrange it, and rule over it: for the most part, he but welters in it, and laboriously tumbles it, and at last sinks under it.

As a man, the ill-fated Werner can still less content us. His feverish, inconstant and wasted life we have already looked at. Hitzig, his determined well-wisher, admits that in practice he was selfish, wearying out his best friends by the most barefaced importunities; a man of no dignity; avaricious, greedy, sensual, at times obscene; in discourse, with all his humor and heartiness, apt to be intolerably long-winded; and of a maladroitness, a blank ineptitude, which exposed him to incessant ridicule and manifold mystifications from people of the world. Nevertheless, under all this rubbish, contends the friendly Biographer, there dwelt, for those who could look more narrowly, a spirit, marred indeed in its beauty, and languishing in painful conscious oppression, yet never wholly forgetful of its original nobleness. Werner's soul was made for affection; and often as, under his too rude collisions with external things, it was struck into harshness and dissonance, there was a tone which spoke of melody, even in its jarrings. A kind, a sad and heartfelt remembrance of his friends seems never to have quitted him: to the last he ceased not from warm love to men at large; nay to awaken in them, with such knowledge as he had, a sense for what was best and highest, may be said to have formed the earnest, though weak and unstable aim of his whole existence. The truth is, his defects as a writer were also his defects as a man: he was feeble, and without volition; in life, as in poetry, his endowments fell into confusion; his character relaxed itself on all sides into incoherent expansion; his activity became gigantic endeavor, followed by most dwarfish performance.

The grand incident of his life, his adoption of the Roman Catholic religion, is one on which we need not heap farther censure; for already, as appears to us, it is rather liable to be too harshly than too leniently dealt with. There is a feeling in the popular mind, which, in well-meant hatred of inconsistency, perhaps in general too sweepingly condemns such changes. Werner, it should be recollected, *had* at all periods of his life *a* religion; nay he hungered and thirsted after truth in this matter, as after the highest good of man; a fact which of itself must, in this respect, set him far above the most consistent of mere unbelievers, — in whose barren and callous soul consistency perhaps is no such brilliant virtue. We pardon genial weather for its changes; but the steadiest of all climates is that of Greenland.

Farther, we must say that, strange as it may seem, in Werner's whole conduct, both before and after his conversion, there is not visible the slightest trace of insincerity. On the whole, there are fewer genuine renegades than men are apt to imagine. Surely, indeed, that must be a nature of extreme baseness, who feels that, in worldly good, he *can* gain by such a step. Is the contempt, the execration of all that have known and loved us, and of millions that have never known us, to be weighed against a mess of pottage, or a piece of money? We hope there are not many, even in the rank of sharpers, that would think so. But for Werner there was no gain in any way; nay rather certainty of loss. He enjoyed or sought no patronage; with his own resources he was already independent though poor, and on a footing of good esteem with all that was most estimable in his country. His little pension, conferred on him, at a prior date, by a Catholic Prince, was not continued after his conversion, except by the Duke of Weimar, a Protestant. He became a mark for calumny; the defenceless butt at which every callow witling made his proof-shot; his character was more deformed and mangled than that of any other man. What had he to gain? Insult and persecution; and with these, as candor bids us believe, the approving voice of his own conscience. To judge from his writings, he was far from repenting of the change he had made; his Catholic faith evidently stands in his own mind as the first blessing of his life, and he clings to it as the anchor of his soul. Scarcely more than once (in the Preface to his *Mutter der Makkabäer*) does he allude to the legions of falsehoods that were in circulation against him; and it is in a spirit which, without entirely concealing the querulousness of nature, nowise fails in the meekness and endurance which became him as a Christian. Here is a fragment of another Paper, published since his death, as it was meant to be; which exhibits him in a still clearer light. The reader may contemn, or, what will be better, pity and sympathize with him; but the structure of this strange piece surely bespeaks anything but insincerity. We translate it with all its breaks and fantastic crotchets, as it stands before us: —

"TESTAMENTARY INSCRIPTION, from Friedrich Ludwig Zacharias Werner, a son," &c. — (here follows a statement of his parentage and birth, with vacant spaces for the date of his death), — "of the following lines, submitted to all such as have more or less felt any friendly interest in his unworthy person, with the request to take warning by his example, and charitably to remember the poor soul of the writer before God, in prayer and good deeds.

"Begun at Florence, on the 24th of September, about eight in the evening, amid the still distant sound of approaching thunder. Concluded, when and where God will!

"Motto, Device and Watchword in Death: *Remittuntur ei peccata multa, quoniam dilexit multum! ! ! Lucas,* caput vii. v. 47.

"N.B. Most humbly and earnestly, and in the name of God, does the Author of this Writing beg, of such honest persons as may find it, to submit the same in any suitable way to public examination.

"*Fecisti nos, Domine, ad Te; et irrequietum est cor nostrum, donec requiescat in Te.* S. Augustinus.

"*Per multa dispergitur, et hic illucque quærit (cor) ubi requiescere possit, et nihil invenit quod ei sufficiat, donec ad ipsum (sc. Deum) redeat.* S. Bernardus.

"In the name of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen!

"The thunder came hither, and is still rolling, though now at a distance. — The name of the Lord be praised! Hallelujah! — I BEGIN: —

"This Paper must needs be brief; because the appointed term for my life itself may already be near at hand. There are not wanting examples of important and unimportant men, who have left behind them in writing the defence, or even sometimes the accusation, of their earthly life. Without estimating such procedure, I am not minded to imitate it. With trembling I reflect that I myself shall first learn in its whole terrific compass what properly I was, when these lines shall be read by men; that is to say, in a point of Time which for me will be no Time; in a condition wherein all experience will for me be too late!

Rex tremendæ majestatis,
Qui salvandos salvas gratis,
Salva me, fons pietatis! ! !

But if I do, till that day when All shall be laid open, draw a veil over my past life, it is not merely out of false shame that I so order it; for though not free from this vice also, I would willingly make known my guilt to all and every one whom my voice might reach, could I hope, by such confession, to atone for what I have done; or thereby to save a single soul from perdition. There are two motives, however, which forbid me to make such an open personal revelation after death: the *one*, because the unclosing of a pestilential grave may be dangerous to the health of the uninfected looker-on; the *other*, because in my Writings (which may God forgive me!), amid a wilderness of poisonous weeds and garbage, there may also be here and there a medicinal herb lying scattered, from which poor patients, to whom it might be useful, would start back with shuddering, did they know the pestiferous soil on which it grew.

"So much, however, in regard to those good creatures as they call themselves, namely to those feeble weaklings who brag of what they designate their good hearts, — so much must I say before God, that such a heart alone, when it is not checked and regulated by forethought and steadfastness, is not only incapable of saving its possessor from destruction, but is rather certain to hurry him, full speed, into that abyss, where I have been, whence I — perhaps ? ! ! ! — by God's grace am snatched, and from which may God mercifully preserve every reader of these lines."[1]

All this is melancholy enough; but it is not like the writing of a hypocrite or repentant apostate. To Protestantism, above all things, Werner shows no thought of returning. In allusion to a rumor, which had spread, of his having given up Catholicism, he says (in the *Preface* already quoted): —

"A stupid falsehood I must reckon it; since, according to my deepest conviction, it is as impossible that a soul in Bliss should return back into the Grave, as that a man who, like me, after a life of error and search has found the priceless jewel of Truth, should, I will not say, give up the same, but hesitate to sacrifice for it blood and life, nay many things perhaps far dearer, with joyful heart, when the one good cause is concerned."

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[1] Werner's *Letzte Lebenstagen* (quoted by Hitzig, p. 80).

And elsewhere in a private letter: —

"I not only assure thee, but I beg of thee to assure all men, if God should ever so withdraw the light of his grace from me, that I cease to be a Catholic, I would a thousand times sooner join myself to Judaism, or to the Bramins on the Ganges: but to that shallowest, driest, most contradictory, inanest Inanity of Protestantism, *never, never, never!*"

Here, perhaps, there is a touch of priestly, of almost feminine vehemence; for it is to a Protestant and an old friend that he writes: but the conclusion of his *Preface* shows him in a better light. Speaking of Second Parts, and regretting that so many of his works were unfinished, he adds: —

"But what specially comforts me is the prospect of — our general Second Part, where, even in the first Scene, *this* consolation, that there *all* our works will be known, may not indeed prove solacing *for us all;* but where, through the strength of Him that alone completes all works, it will be granted to those whom He has saved, not only to know each other, but even to know Him, as by Him they are known! — With my trust in Christ, whom I have not yet won, I regard, with the Teacher of the Gentiles, all things but dross that I may win him; and to Him, cordially and lovingly do I, in life or at death, commit you all, my beloved Friends and my beloved Enemies!"

On the whole, we cannot think it doubtful that Werner's belief was real and heartfelt. But how then, our wondering readers may inquire, if his belief was real and not pretended, *how* then did he believe? He, who scoffs in infidel style at the truths of Protestantism, by what alchemy did he succeed in tempering into credibility the harder and bulkier dogmas of Popery? Of Popery, too, the frauds and gross corruptions of which he has so fiercely exposed in his *Martin Luther;* and this, moreover, without cancelling, or even softening his vituperations, long after his conversion, in the very last edition of that drama? To this question, we are far from pretending to have any answer that altogether satisfies ourselves; much less that shall altogether satisfy others. Meanwhile, there are two considerations which throw light on the difficulty for us:

these, as some step, or at least, attempt towards a solution of it, we shall not withhold.

The *first* lies in Werner's individual character and mode of life. Not only was he born a *mystic*, not only had he lived from of old amid freemasonry, and all manner of cabalistic and other traditionary chimeras; he was also, and had long been, what is emphatically called *dissolute;* a word which has now lost somewhat of its original force; but which, as applied here, is still more just and significant in its etymological than in its common acceptation. He was a man *dissolute;* that is, by a long course of vicious indulgences, enervated and *loosened asunder.* Everywhere in Werner's life and actions we discern a mind relaxed from its proper tension; no longer capable of effort and toilsome resolute vigilance; but floating almost passively with the current of its impulses, in languid, imaginative, Asiatic reverie. That such a man should discriminate, with sharp fearless logic, between beloved errors and unwelcome truths, was not to be expected. His belief is likely to have been *persuasion* rather than *conviction*, both as it related to Religion, and to other subjects. What, or how much a man in this way may bring himself to *believe*, with such force and distinctness as he honestly and usually calls *belief*, there is no predicting.

But *another* consideration, which we think should nowise be omitted, is the general state of religious opinion in Germany, especially among such minds as Werner was most apt to take for his exemplars. To this complex and highly interesting subject we can, for the present, do nothing more than allude. So much, however, we may say: It is a common theory among the Germans, that every Creed, every Form of worship, is a *form* merely; the mortal and ever-changing *body*, in which the immortal and unchanging *spirit* of Religion is, with more or less completeness, expressed to the material eye, and made manifest and influential among the doings of men. It is thus, for instance, that Johannes Müller, in his *Universal History*, professes to consider the Mosaic Law, the creed of Mahomet, nay Luther's Reformation; and, in short, all other systems of Faith; which he scruples not to designate, without special praise or censure, simply as *Vorstellungsarten*, "Modes of Representation." We could report equally singular things of Schelling and others, belonging to the philosophic class; nay of Herder, a Protestant clergyman, and even bearing high authority in the Church. Now, it is clear, in a country where such opinions are openly and generally professed, a change of religious creed must be comparatively a slight matter. Conversions to Catholicism are accordingly by no means unknown among the Germans: Friedrich Schlegel, and the younger Count von Stolberg, men, as we should think, of vigorous intellect, and of character above suspicion, were colleagues, or rather precursors, of Werner in this adventure; and, indeed, formed part of his acquaintance at Vienna. It is but, they would perhaps say, as if a melodist, inspired with harmony of inward music, should choose this instrument in preference to that, for giving voice to it: the inward inspiration is the grand concern; and to express it, the "deep, majestic, solemn organ" of the Unchangeable Church may be better fitted than the "scrannel pipe" of a withered, trivial, Arian Protestantism. That Werner, still more that Schlegel and Stolberg could, on the strength of such hypotheses, put off or put on their religious creed, like a new suit of apparel, we are far from asserting; they are men of earnest hearts, and seem to have a deep feeling of devotion: but it should be remembered, that what forms the groundwork of their religion is professedly not Demonstration but Faith; and so pliant a theory could not but help to soften the transition from the former to the latter. That some such principle, in one shape or another, lurked in Werner's mind, we think we can perceive from several indications; among others, from the Prologue to his last tragedy, where, mysteriously enough, under the emblem of a Phœnix, he seems to be shadowing forth the history of his own Faith; and represents himself even then as merely "climbing the *tree*, where the pinions of his Phœnix last *vanished;*" but not hoping to regain that blissful vision, till his eyes shall have been opened by death.

On the whole, we must not pretend to understand Werner, or expound him with scientific rigor; acting many times with only half consciousness, he was always, in some degree, an enigma to himself, and may well be obscured to us. Above all, there are mysteries and unsounded abysses in every human heart; and that is but a questionable philosophy which undertakes so readily to explain them. Religious belief especially, at least when it seems heartfelt and well-intentioned, is no subject for harsh or even irreverent investigation. He is a wise man that, having such a belief, knows and sees clearly the grounds of it in himself: and those, we imagine, who have explored with strictest scrutiny the secret of their own bosoms will be least apt to rush with intolerant violence into that of other men's.

"The good Werner," says Jean Paul, "fell, like our more vigorous Hoffmann, into the poetical fermenting-vat (*Gährbottich*) of our time, where all Literatures, Freedoms, Tastes and Untastes are foaming through each other; and where all is to be found, excepting truth, diligence and the polish of the file. Both would have come forth clearer had they studied in Lessing's day."[1] We cannot justify Werner: yet let him be condemned with pity! And well were it could each of us apply to himself those words, which Hitzig, in his friendly indignation, would "thunder in the ears" of many a German gainsayer: *Take thou the beam out of thine own eye; then shalt thou see clearly to take the mote out of thy brother's.*

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[1] Letter to Hitzig, in *Jean Pauls Leben*, by Döring.

GOETHE'S HELENA.[1]

[1828.]

Novalis has rather tauntingly asserted of Goethe, that the grand law of his being is to conclude whatsoever he undertakes; that, let him engage in any task, no matter what its difficulties or how small its worth, he cannot quit it till he has mastered its whole secret, finished it, and made the result of it his own. This, surely, whatever Novalis might think, is a quality of which it is far safer to have too much than too little: and if, in a friendlier spirit, we admit that it does strikingly belong to Goethe, these his present occupations will not seem out of harmony with the rest of his life; but rather it may be regarded as a singular constancy of fortune, which now allows him, after completing so many single enterprises, to adjust deliberately the details and combination of the whole; and thus, in perfecting his individual works, to put the last hand to the highest of all his works, his own literary character, and leave the impress of it to posterity in that form and accompaniment which he himself reckons fittest. For the last two years, as many of our readers may know, the venerable Poet has been employed in a patient and thorough revisal of all his Writings; an edition of which, designated as the "complete and final" one, was commenced in 1827, under external encouragements of the most flattering sort, and with arrangements for private co-operation, which, as we learn, have secured the constant progress of the work "against every accident." The first *Lieferung*, of five volumes, is now in our hands; a second of like extent, we understand to be already on its way hither; and thus by regular "Deliveries," from half-year to half-year, the whole Forty Volumes are to be completed in 1831.

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[1] Foreign Review, No. 2. — *Goethes Sämmtliche Werke. Vollständige Ausgabe letzter Hand.* (Goethe's Collective Works. Complete Edition, with his final Corrections.) — First Portion, vol. i.–v. 16mo and 8vo. Cotta; Stuttgard and Tübingen, 1827.

To the lover of German literature, or of literature in general, this undertaking will not be indifferent: considering, as he must do, the works of Goethe to be among the most important which Germany for some centuries has sent forth, he will value their correctness and completeness for its own sake; and not the less, as forming the conclusion of a long process to which the last step was still wanting; whereby he may not only enjoy the result, but instruct himself by following so great a master through the changes which led to it. We can now add, that, to the mere book-collector also, the business promises to be satisfactory. This Edition, avoiding any attempt at splendor or unnecessary decoration, ranks, nevertheless, in regard to accuracy, convenience, and true simple elegance, among the best specimens of German typography. The cost too seems moderate; so that, on every account, we doubt not but these tasteful volumes will spread far and wide in their own country, and by and by, we may hope, be met with here in many a British library.

Hitherto, in this First Portion, we have found little or no alteration of what was already known; but, in return, some changes of arrangement; and, what is more important, some additions of heretofore unpublished poems; in particular, a piece entitled "*Helena, a classico-romantic Phantasmagoria*," which occupies some eighty pages of Volume Fourth. It is to this piece that we now propose directing the attention of our readers. Such of these as have studied *Helena* for themselves, must have felt how little calculated it is, either intrinsically or by its extrinsic relations and allusions, to be rendered very interesting or even very intelligible to the English public, and may incline to augur ill of our enterprise. Indeed, to our own eyes it already looks dubious enough. But the dainty little "Phantasmagoria," it would appear, has become a subject of diligent and truly wonderful speculation to our German neighbors: of which also some vague rumors seem now to have reached this country; and these likely enough to awaken on all hands a curiosity,[1] which, whether intelligent or idle, it were a kind of good deed to allay. In a Journal of this sort, what little light on such a matter is at our disposal may naturally be looked for.

Helena, like many of Goethe's works, by no means carries its significance written on its forehead, so that he who runs may read; but, on the contrary, it is enveloped in a certain mystery, under coy disguises, which, to hasty readers, may be not only offensively obscure, but altogether provoking and impenetrable. Neither is this any new thing with Goethe. Often has he produced compositions, both in prose and verse, which bring critic and commentator into straits, or even to a total nonplus. Some we have wholly parabolic; some half-literal, half-parabolic; these latter are occasionally studied, by dull heads, in the literal sense alone; and not only studied, but condemned: for, in truth, the outward meaning seems unsatisfactory enough, were it not that ever and anon we are reminded of a cunning, manifold meaning which lies hidden under it; and incited by capricious beckonings to evolve this, more and more completely, from its quaint concealment.

Did we believe that Goethe adopted this mode of writing as a vulgar lure, to confer on his poems the interest which might belong to so many charades, we should hold it a very poor proceeding. Of this most readers of Goethe will know that he is incapable. Such juggleries, and uncertain anglings for distinction, are a class of accomplishments to which he has never made any pretension. The truth is, this style has, in many cases, its own appropriateness. Certainly, in all matters of Business and Science, in all expositions of fact or argument, clearness and ready comprehensibility are a great, often an indispensable object. Nor is there any man better aware of this principle than Goethe, or who more rigorously adheres to it, or more happily exemplifies it, wherever it seems applicable. But in this, as in many other respects, Science and Poetry, having separate purposes, may have each its several law. If an artist has conceived his subject in the secret shrine of his own mind, and knows, with a knowledge beyond all power of cavil, that it is true and pure, he may choose his own manner of exhibiting it, and will generally be the fittest to choose it well. One degree of light, he may find, will beseem one delineation; quite a different degree of light another. The face of Agamemnon was not painted but hidden in the old picture: the Veiled Figure at Sais was the most expressive in the Temple. In fact, the grand point is to *have* a meaning, a genuine, deep and noble one; the proper form for embodying this, the form best suited to the subject and to the author, will gather round it almost of its own accord. We profess ourselves unfriendly to no mode of communicating Truth; which we rejoice to meet with in all shapes, from that of the child's Catechism to the deepest poetical Allegory. Nay the Allegory itself may sometimes be the truest part of the matter. John Bunyan, we hope, is nowise our best theologian; neither, unhappily, is theology our most attractive science; yet which of our compends and treatises, nay which of our romances and poems, lives in such mild sunshine as the good old *Pilgrim's Progress* in the memory of so many men?

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[1] See, for instance, the *Athenæum*, No. 7, where an article stands headed with these words: FAUST, HELEN OF TROY, AND LORD BYRON.

Under Goethe's management, this style of composition has often a singular charm. The reader is kept on the alert, ever conscious of his own active co-operation; light breaks on him, and clearer and clearer vision, by degrees; till at last the whole lovely Shape comes forth, definite, it may be, and bright with heavenly radiance, or fading, on this side and that, into vague expressive mystery; but true in both cases, and beautiful with nameless enchantments, as the poet's own eye may have beheld it. We love it the more for the labor it has given us: we almost feel as if we ourselves had assisted in its creation. And herein lies the highest merit of a piece, and the proper art of reading it. We have not *read* an author till we have seen his object, whatever it may be, as *he* saw it. Is it a matter of reasoning, and has he reasoned stupidly and falsely? We should understand the circumstances which, to his mind, made it seem true, or persuaded him to write it, knowing that it was not so. In any other way we do him injustice if we judge him. Is it of poetry? His words are so many symbols, to which we ourselves must furnish the interpretation; or they remain, as in all prosaic minds the words of poetry ever do, a dead letter: indications they are, barren in themselves, but, by following which, we also may reach, or approach, that Hill of Vision where the poet stood, beholding the glorious scene which it is the purport of his poem to show others.

A reposing state, in which the Hill were brought under us, not we obliged to mount it, might indeed for the present be more convenient; but, in the end, it could not be equally satisfying. Continuance of passive pleasure, it should never be forgotten, is here, as under all conditions of mortal existence, an impossibility. Everywhere in life, the true question is, not what we *gain*, but what we *do:* so also in intellectual matters, in conversation, in reading, which is more precise and careful conversation, it is not what we *receive*, but what we are made to *give*, that chiefly contents and profits us. True, the mass of readers will object; because, like the mass of men, they are too indolent. But if any one affect, not the active and watchful, but the passive and somnolent line of study, are there not writers expressly fashioned for him, enough and to spare? It is but the smaller number of books that become more instructive by a second perusal: the great majority are as perfectly plain as perfect triteness can make them. Yet, if time is precious, no book that will not improve by repeated readings deserves to be read at all. And were there an artist of a right spirit; a man of wisdom, conscious of his high vocation, of whom we could know beforehand that he had not written without purpose and earnest meditation, that he knew what he had written, and had embodied in it, more or less, the creations of a deep and noble soul, — should we not draw near to him reverently, as disciples to a master; and what task could there be more profitable than to read him as we have described, to study him even to his minutest meanings? For, were not this to think as he had thought, to see with his gifted eyes, to make the very mood and feeling of his great and rich mind the mood also of our poor and little one? It is under the consciousness of some such mutual relation that Goethe writes, and that his countrymen now reckon themselves bound to read him: a relation singular, we might say solitary, in the present time; but which it is ever necessary to bear in mind in estimating his literary procedure.

To justify it in this particular, much more might be said, were that our chief business at present. But what mainly concerns us here, is to know that such, justified or not, is the poet's manner of writing; which also must prescribe for us a correspondent manner of studying him, if we study him at all. For the rest, on this latter point he nowhere expresses any undue anxiety. His works have invariably been sent forth without preface, without note or comment of any kind; but left, sometimes plain and direct, sometimes dim and typical, in what degree of clearness or obscurity he himself may have judged best, to be scanned, and glossed, and censured, and distorted, as might please the innumerable multitude of critics; to whose verdicts he has been, for a great part of his life, accused of listening with unwarrantable composure. *Helena* is no exception to that practice, but rather among the strong instances of it. This *Interlude to Faust* presents itself abruptly, under a character not a little enigmatic; so that, at first view, we know not well what to make of it; and only after repeated perusals, will the scattered glimmerings of significance begin to coalesce into continuous light, and the whole, in any measure, rise before us with that greater or less degree of coherence which it may have had in the mind of the poet. Nay, after all, no perfect clearness may be attained, but only various approximations to it; hints and half glances of a meaning, which is still shrouded in vagueness; nay, to the just picturing of which this very vagueness was essential. For the whole piece has a dream-like character; and in these cases, no prudent soothsayer will be altogether confident. To our readers we must now endeavor, so far as possible, to show both the dream and its interpretation: the former as it stands written before us; the latter from our own private conjecture alone; for of those strange German comments we yet know nothing except by the faintest hearsay.

Helena forms part of a continuation to *Faust;* but, happily for our present undertaking, its connection with the latter work is much looser than might have been expected. We say happily; because *Faust,* though considerably talked of in England, appears still to be nowise known. We have made it our duty to inspect the English Translation of *Faust,* as well as the Extracts which accompany Retzsch's *Outlines;* and various disquisitions and animadversions, vituperative or laudatory, grounded on these two works; but unfortunately have found there no cause to alter the above persuasion. *Faust* is emphatically a work of Art; a work matured in the mysterious depths of a vast and wonderful mind; and bodied forth with that truth and curious felicity of composition, in which this man is generally admitted to have no living rival. To reconstruct such a work in another language; to show it in its hard yet graceful strength; with those slight witching traits of pathos or of sarcasm, those glimpses of solemnity or terror, and so many reflexes and evanescent echoes of meaning, which connect it in strange union with the whole Infinite of thought, — were business for a man of different powers than has yet attempted German translation among us. In fact, *Faust* is to be read not once but many times, if we would understand it: every line, every word has its purport; and only in such minute inspection will the essential significance of the poem display itself. Perhaps it is even chiefly by following these fainter traces and tokens that the true point of vision for the whole is discovered to us; that we get to stand at last in the proper scene of Faust; a wild and wondrous region, where in pale light the primeval Shapes of Chaos — as it were, the Foundations of Being itself — seem to loom forth, dim and huge, in the vague Immensity around us; and the life and nature of man, with its brief interests, its misery and sin, its mad passion and poor frivolity, struts and frets its hour, encompassed and overlooked by that stupendous All, of which it forms an indissoluble though so mean a fraction. He who would study all this must for a long time, we are afraid, be content to study it in the original.

But our English criticisms of *Faust* have been of a still more unedifying sort. Let any man fancy the *Œdipus Tyrannus* discovered for the first time; translated from an unknown Greek manuscript, by some ready-writing manufacturer; and "brought out" at Drury Lane, with new music, made as "apothecaries make new mixtures, by pouring out of one vessel into another"! Then read the theatrical report in the Morning Papers, and the Magazines of next month. Was not the whole affair rather "heavy"? How indifferent did the audience sit; how little use was made of the handkerchief, except by such as took snuff! Did not Œdipus somewhat remind us of a blubbering school-boy, and Jocasta of a decayed milliner? Confess that the plot was monstrous; nay, considering the marriage-law of England, utterly immoral. On the whole, what a singular deficiency of *taste* must this Sophocles have labored under! But probably he was excluded from the "society of the influential classes;" for, after all, the man is not without indications of genius: had *we* had the training of him — And so on, through all the variations of the critical cornpipe.

So might it have fared with the ancient Grecian; for so has it fared with the only modern that writes in a Grecian spirit. This treatment of *Faust* may deserve to be mentioned, for various reasons; not to be lamented over, because, as in much more important instances, it is inevitable, and lies in the nature of the case. Besides, a better state of things is evidently enough coming round. By and by, the labors, poetical and intellectual, of the Germans, as of other nations, will appear before us in their true shape; and *Faust*, among the rest, will have justice done it. For ourselves, it were unwise presumption, at any time, to pretend opening the full poetical significance of *Faust;* nor is this the place for making such an attempt. Present purposes will be answered if we can point out some general features and bearings of the piece; such as to exhibit its relations with *Helena;* by what contrivances this latter has been intercalated into it, and how far the strange picture and the strange framing it is enclosed in correspond.

The story of Faust forms one of the most remarkable productions of the Middle Ages; or rather, it is the most striking embodiment of a highly remarkable belief, which originated or prevailed in those ages. Considered strictly, it may take the rank of a Christian mythus, in the same sense as the story of Prometheus, of Titan, and the like, are Pagan ones; and to our keener inspection, it will disclose a no less impressive or characteristic aspect of the same human nature, — here bright, joyful, self-confident, smiling even in its sternness; there deep, meditative, awe-struck, austere, — in which both they and it took their rise. To us, in these days, it is not easy to estimate how this story of Faust, invested with its magic and infernal horrors, must have harrowed up the souls of a rude and earnest people, in an age when its dialect was not yet obsolete, and such contracts with the principle of Evil were thought not only credible in general, but possible to every individual auditor who here shuddered at the mention of them. The day of Magic is gone by; Witchcraft has been put a stop to by act of parliament. But the mysterious relations which it emblemed still continue; the Soul of Man still fights with the dark influences of Ignorance, Misery and Sin; still lacerates itself, like a captive bird, against the iron limits which Necessity has drawn round it; still follows False Shows, seeking peace and good on paths where no peace or good is to be found. In this sense, *Faust* may still be considered as true; nay as a truth of the most impressive sort, and one which will always remain true.

To body forth in modern symbols a feeling so old and deep-rooted in our whole European way of thought, were a task not unworthy of the highest poetical genius. In Germany, accordingly, it has several times been attempted, and with very various success. Klinger has produced a Romance of *Faust*, full of rugged sense, and here and there not without considerable strength of delineation; yet, on the whole, of an essentially unpoetical character; dead, or living with only a mechanical life; coarse, almost gross, and to our minds far too redolent of pitch and bitumen. Maler Müller's *Faust*, which is a Drama, must be regarded as a much more genial performance, so far as it goes: the secondary characters, the Jews and rakish Students, often remind us of our own Fords and Marlowes. His main persons, however, Faust and the Devil, are but inadequately conceived; Faust is little more than self-willed, supercilious, and, alas, insolvent; the Devils, above all, are savage, long-winded and insufferably noisy. Besides, the piece has been left in a fragmentary state; it can nowise pass as the best work of Müller's.[1] Klingemann's *Faust*, which also is (or lately *was*) a Drama, we have never seen; and have only heard of it as of a tawdry and hollow article, suited for immediate use, and immediate oblivion.

Goethe, we believe, was the first who tried this subject; and is, on all hands, considered as by far the most successful. His manner of treating it appears to us, so far as we can understand it, peculiarly just and happy. He retains the supernatural vesture of the story, but retains it with the consciousness, on his and our part, that it is a chimera. His art-magic comes forth in doubtful twilight; vague in its outline;

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[1] Friedrich Müller (more commonly called *Maler*, or *Painter* Müller) is here, so far as we know, named for the first time to English readers. Nevertheless, in any solid study of German literature this author must take precedence of many hundreds whose reputation has travelled faster. But Müller has been unfortunate in his own country, as well as here. At an early age, meeting with no success as a poet, he quitted that art for painting; and retired, perhaps in disgust, into Italy; where also but little preferment seems to have awaited him. His writings, after almost half a century of neglect, were at length brought into sight and general estimation by Ludwig Tieck; at a time when the author might indeed say, that he was "old and could not enjoy it, solitary and could not impart it," but not, unhappily, that he was "known and did not want it," for his fine genius had yet made for itself no free way amid so many obstructions, and still continued unrewarded and unrecognized. His paintings, chiefly of still-life and animals, are said to possess a true though no very extraordinary merit: but of his poetry we will venture to assert that it bespeaks a genuine feeling and talent, nay rises at times even into the higher regions of Art. His *Adam's Awakening*, his *Satyr Mopsus*, his *Nusskernen* (Nutshelling), informed as they are with simple kindly strength, with clear vision, and love of nature, are incomparably the best German, or indeed, modern Idyls; his *Genoveva* will stand reading even with that of Tieck. These things are now acknowledged among the Germans; but to Müller the acknowledgment is of no avail. He died some two years ago at Rome, where he seems to have subsisted latterly as a sort of a picture-cicerone.

interwoven everywhere with light sarcasm; nowise as a real Object, but as a real Shadow of an Object, which is also real, yet lies beyond our horizon, and except in its shadows, cannot itself be seen. Nothing were simpler than to look in this new poem for a new "Satan's Invisible World displayed," or any effort to excite the sceptical minds of these days by goblins, wizards and other infernal ware. Such enterprises belong to artists of a different species: Goethe's Devil is a cultivated personage, and acquainted with the modern sciences; sneers at witchcraft and the black-art, even while employing them, as heartily as any member of the French Institute; for he is a *philosophe*, and doubts most things, nay half disbelieves even his own existence. It is not without a cunning effort that all this is managed; but managed, in a considerable degree, it is; for a world of magic is opened to us which, we might almost say, we feel at once to be true and not true.

In fact, Mephistopheles comes before us, not arrayed in the terrors of Cocytus and Phlegethon, but in the natural indelible deformity of Wickedness; he is the Devil, not of Superstition, but of Knowledge. Here is no cloven foot, or horns and tail: he himself informs us that, during the late march of intellect, the very Devil has participated in the spirit of the age, and laid these appendages aside. Doubtless, Mephistopheles "has the manners of a gentleman;" he "knows the world;" nothing can exceed the easy tact with which he manages himself; his wit and sarcasm are unlimited; the cool heartfelt contempt with which he despises all things, human and divine, might make the fortune of half a dozen "fellows about town." Yet withal he is a devil in very deed; a genuine Son of Night. He calls himself the Denier, and this truly is his name; for, as Voltaire did with historical doubts, so does he with all moral appearances; settles them with a *N'en croyez rien*. The shrewd, all-informed intellect he has, is an attorney intellect; it can contradict, but it cannot affirm. With lynx vision, he descries at a glance the ridiculous, the unsuitable, the bad; but for the solemn, the noble, the worthy, he is blind as his ancient Mother. Thus does he go along, qualifying, confuting, despising; on all hands detecting the false, but without force to bring forth, or even to discern, any glimpse of the true. Poor Devil! what truth should there be for him? To see Falsehood is his only Truth: falsehood and evil are the rule, truth and good the exception which confirms it. He can believe in nothing, but in his own self-conceit, and in the indestructible baseness, folly and hypocrisy of men. For him, virtue is some bubble of the blood: "it stands written on his face that he never loved a living soul." Nay, he cannot even hate: at Faust himself he has no grudge; he merely tempts him by way of experiment, and to pass the time scientifically. Such a combination of perfect Understanding with perfect Selfishness, of logical Life with moral Death; so universal a denier, both in heart and head, — is undoubtedly a child of Darkness, an emissary of the primeval Nothing: and coming forward, as he does, like a person of breeding, and without any flavor of brimstone, may stand here, in his merely spiritual deformity, at once potent, dangerous and contemptible, as the best and only genuine Devil of these latter times.

In strong contrast with this impersonation of modern worldly-mindedness stands Faust himself, by nature the antagonist of it, but destined also to be its victim. If Mephistopheles represent the spirit of Denial, Faust may represent that of Inquiry and Endeavor: the two are, by necessity, in conflict; the light and the darkness of man's life and mind. Intrinsically, Faust is a noble being, though no wise one. His desires are towards the high and true; nay with a whirlwind impetuosity he rushes forth over the Universe to grasp all excellence; his heart yearns towards the infinite and the invisible: only that he knows not the conditions under which alone this is to be attained. Confiding in his feeling of himself, he has started with the tacit persuasion, so natural to all men, that *he* at least, however it may fare with others, shall and must be *happy;* a deep-seated, though only half-conscious conviction lurks in him, that wherever he is not successful, fortune has dealt with him *unjustly*. His purposes are fair, nay generous: why should he not prosper in them? For in all his lofty aspirings, his strivings after truth and more than human greatness of mind, it has never struck him to inquire how he, the striver, was warranted for such enterprises: with what faculty Nature had equipped him; within what limits she had hemmed him in; by what right *he* pretended to be happy, or could, some short space ago, have pretended to *be* at all. Experience, indeed, will teach him, for "Experience is the best of schoolmasters; only the school-fees are heavy." As yet too, disappointment, which fronts him on every hand, rather maddens than instructs. Faust has spent his youth and manhood, not as others do, in the sunny crowded paths of profit, or among the rosy bowers of pleasure, but darkly and alone in the search of Truth; is it fit that Truth should now hide herself, and his sleepless pilgrimage towards Knowledge and Vision end in the pale shadow of Doubt? To his dream of a glorious higher happiness, all earthly happiness has been sacrificed; friendship, love, the social rewards of ambition were cheerfully cast aside, for his eye and his heart were bent on a region of clear and supreme good; and now, in its stead, he finds isolation, silence and despair. What solace remains? Virtue once promised to be her own reward; but because she does not pay him in the current coin of worldly enjoyment, he reckons her too a del sion; and, like Brutus, reproaches as a shadow, what he once worshipped as a substance. Whither shall he now tend? For his loadstars have gone out one by one; and as the darkness fell, the strong steady wind has changed into a fierce and aimless tornado. Faust calls himself a monster, "without object, yet without rest." The vehement, keen and stormful nature of the man is stung into fury, as he thinks of all he has endured and lost; he broods in gloomy meditation, and, like Bellerophon, wanders apart, "eating his own heart;" or, bursting into fiery paroxysms, curses man's whole existence as a mockery; curses hope and faith, and joy and care, and what is worst, "curses patience more than all the rest." Had his weak arm the power, he could smite the Universe asunder, as at the crack of Doom, and hurl his own vexed being along with it into the silence of Annihilation.

Thus Faust is a man who has quitted the ways of vulga men, without light to guide him on a better way. No longer restricted by the sympathies, the common interests and common persuasions by which the mass of mortals, each individually ignorant, nay, it may be, stolid and altogether blind as to the proper aim of life, are yet held together, and, like stones in the channel of a torrent, by their very multitude and mutual collision, are made to move with some regularity, — he is still but a slave; the slave of impulses, which are stronger, not truer or better, and the more unsafe that they are solitary. He sees the vulgar of mankind happy; but happy only in their baseness. Himself he feels to be peculiar; the victim of a strange, an unexampled destiny; not as other men, he is "*with* them, not *of* them." There is misery here, nay, as Goethe has elsewhere wisely remarked, the beginning of madness itself. It is only in the sentiment of companionship that men feel safe and assured: to all doubts and mysterious "questionings of destiny," their sole satisfying answer is, *Others do and suffer the like.* Were it not for this, the dullest day-drudge of Mammon might think himself into unspeakable abysses of despair; for he too is "fearfully and wonderfully made;" Infinitude and Incomprehensibility surround him on this hand and that; and the vague spectre Death, silent and sure as Time, is advancing at all moments to sweep him away forever. But he answers, *Others do and suffer the like;* and plods along without misgivings. Were there but One Man in the world, he would be a terror to himself; and the highest man not less so than the lowest. Now it is as this One Man that Faust regards himself: he is divided from his fellows; cannot answer with them, *Others do the like;* and yet, why or how he specially is to *do* or *suffer,* will nowhere reveal itself. For he is still "in the gall of bitterness;" Pride, and an entire uncompromising though secret love of Self, are still the mainsprings of his conduct. Knowledge with him is precious only because it is power; even virtue he would love chiefly as a finer sort of sensuality, and because it was *his* virtue. A ravenous hunger for enjoyment haunts him everywhere; the stinted allotments of earthly life are as a mockery to him: to the iron law of Force he will not yield, for his heart, though torn, is yet unweakened, and till Humility shall open his eyes, the soft law of Wisdom will be hidden from him.

To invest a man of this character with supernatural powers is but enabling him to repeat his error on a larger scale, to play the same false game with a deeper and more ruinous stake. Go where he may, he will "find himself again in a conditional world;" widen his sphere as he pleases, he will find it again encircled by the empire of Necessity; the gay island of Existence is again but a fraction of the ancient realm of Night. Were he all-wise and all-powerful, perhaps he might be contented and virtuous; scarcely otherwise. The poorest human soul is infinite in wishes, and the infinite Universe was not made for one, but for all. Vain were it for Faust, by heaping height on height, to struggle towards infinitude; while to that law of Self-denial, by which alone man's narrow destiny may become an infinitude within itself, he is still a stranger. Such, however, is his attempt; not indeed incited by hope, but goaded on by despair, he unites himself with the Fiend, as with a stronger though a wicked agency; reckless of all issues, if so were that, by these means, the craving of his heart might be stayed, and the dark secret of Destiny unravelled or forgotten.

It is this conflicting union of the higher nature of the soul with the lower elements of human life; of Faust, the son of Light and Free-will, with the influences of Doubt, Denial and Obstruction, or Mephistopheles, who is the symbol and spokesman of these, that the poet has here proposed to delineate. A high problem, and of which the solution is yet far from completed; nay perhaps, in a poetical sense, is not, strictly speaking, capable of completion. For it is to be remarked that, in this contract with the Prince of Darkness, little or no mention or allusion is made to a Future Life; whereby it might seem as if the action was not intended, in the manner of the old Legend, to terminate in Faust's perdition; but rather as if an altogether different end must be provided for him. Faust, indeed, wild and wilful as he is, cannot be regarded as a wicked, much less as an utterly reprobate man: we do not reckon him ill-intentioned, but misguided and miserable; he falls into crime, not by purpose, but by accident and blindness. To send him to the Pit of Woe, to render such a character the eternal slave of Mephistopheles, would look like making darkness triumphant over light, blind force over erring reason; or at best, were cutting the Gordian knot, not loosing it. If we mistake not, Goethe's *Faust* will have a finer moral than the old nursery-tale, or the other plays and tales that have been founded on it. Our seared and blighted yet still noble Faust will not end in the madness of horror, but in Peace grounded on better Knowledge. Whence that Knowledge is to come, what higher and freer world of Art or Religion may be hovering in the mind of the Poet, we will not try to surmise; perhaps in bright aerial emblematic glimpses, he may yet show it us, transient and afar off, yet clear with orient beauty, as a Land of Wonders and new Poetic Heaven.

With regard to that part of the Work already finished, we must here say little more. *Faust*, as it yet stands, is, indeed, only a stating of the difficulty; but a stating of it wisely, truly and with deepest poetic emphasis. For how many living hearts, even now imprisoned in the perplexities of Doubt, do these wild piercing tones of Faust, his withering agonies and fiery desperation, "speak the word they have long been waiting to hear"! A nameless pain had long brooded over the soul: here, by some light touch, it starts into form and voice; we see it and know it, and see that another also knew it. This *Faust* is as a mystic Oracle for the mind; a Dodona grove, where the oaks and fountains prophesy to us of our destiny, and murmur unearthly secrets.

How all this is managed, and the Poem so curiously fashioned; how the clearest insight is combined with the keenest feeling, and the boldest and wildest imagination; by what soft and skilful finishing these so heterogeneous elements are blended in fine harmony, and the dark world of spirits, with its merely metaphysical entities, plays like a checkering of strange mysterious shadows among the palpable objects of material life; and the whole, firm in its details and sharp and solid as reality, yet hangs before us melting on all sides into air, and free and light as the baseless fabric of a vision; all this the reader can learn fully nowhere but, by long study, in the Work itself. The general scope and spirit of it we have now endeavored to sketch; the few incidents on which, with the aid of much dialogue and exposition, these have been brought out, are perhaps already known to most readers, and, at all events, need not be minutely recapitulated here. Mephistopheles has promised to himself that he will lead Faust "through the bustling inanity of life," but that its pleasures shall tempt and not satisfy him; "food shall hover before his eager lips, but he shall beg for nourishment in vain." Hitherto they have travelled but a short way together; yet so far, the Denier has kept his engagement well. Faust, endowed with all earthly and many more than earthly advantages, is still no nearer contentment; nay, after a brief season of marred and uncertain joy, he finds himself sunk into deeper wretchedness than ever. Margaret, an innocent girl whom he loves, but has betrayed, is doomed to die, and already crazed in brain, less for her own errors than for his: in a scene of true pathos, he would fain persuade her to escape with him, by the aid of Mephistopheles, from prison; but in the instinct of her heart she finds an invincible aversion to the Fiend: she chooses death and ignominy rather than life and love, if of his giving. At her final refusal, Mephistopheles proclaims that "she is judged," a "voice from Above" that "she is saved;" the action terminates; Faust and Mephistopheles vanish from our sight, as into boundless Space.

And now, after so long a preface, we arrive at *Helena*, the "Classico-romantic Phantasmagoria," where these Adventurers, strangely altered by travel, and in altogether different costume, have again risen into sight. Our long preface was not needless; for *Faust* and *Helena*, though separated by some wide and marvellous interval, are nowise disconnected. The characters may have changed by absence; Faust is no longer the same bitter and tempestuous man, but appears in chivalrous composure, with a silent energy, a grave and, as it were, commanding ardor. Mephistopheles alone may retain somewhat of his old spiteful shrewdness: but still the past state of these personages must illustrate the present; and only by what we remember of them, can we try to interpret what we see. In fact, the style of *Helena* is altogether new; quiet, simple, joyful; passing by a short gradation from Classic dignity into Romantic pomp; it has everywhere a full and sunny tone of coloring; resembles not a tragedy, but a gay gorgeous masque. Neither is Faust's former history alluded to, or any explanation given us of occurrences that may have intervened. It is a light scene, divided by chasms and unknown distance from that other country of gloom. Nevertheless, the latter still frowns in the background; nay rises aloft, shutting out farther view, and our gay vision attains a new significance as it is painted on that canvas of storm.

We question whether it ever occurred to any English reader of *Faust*, that the work needed a continuation, or even admitted one. To the Germans, however, in their deeper study of a favorite poem, which also they have full means of studying, this has long been no secret; and such as have seen with what zeal most German readers cherish *Faust*, and how the younger of them will recite whole scenes of it with a vehemence resembling that of Gil Blas and his *Figures Hibernoises*, in the streets of Oviedo, may estimate the interest excited in that country by the following Notice from the Author, published last year in his *Kunst und Alterthum.*

"*Helena. Interlude in Faust.*

"Faust's character, in the elevation to which latter refinement, working on the old rude Tradition, has raised it, represents a man who, feeling impatient and imprisoned within the limits of mere earthly existence, regards the possession of the highest knowledge, the enjoyment of the fairest blessings, as insufficient even in the slightest degree to satisfy his longing: a spirit, accordingly, which struggling out on all sides, ever returns the more unhappy.

"This form of mind is so accordant with our modern disposition, that various persons of ability have been induced to undertake the treatment of such a subject. My manner of attempting it obtained approval: distinguished men considered the matter, and commented on my performance; all which I thankfully observed. At the same time I could not but wonder that none of those who undertook a continuation and completion of my Fragment had lighted on the thought, which seemed so obvious, that the composition of a Second Part must necessarily elevate itself altogether away from the hampered sphere of the First, and conduct a man of such a nature into higher regions, under worthier circumstances.

"How I, for my part, had determined to essay this, lay silently before my own mind, from time to time exciting me to some progress; while from all and each I carefully guarded my secret, still in hope of bringing the work to the wished-for issue. Now, however, I must no longer keep back; or, in publishing my collective Endeavors, conceal any farther secret from the world; to which, on the contrary, I feel myself bound to submit my whole labors, even though in a fragmentary state.

"Accordingly I have resolved that the above-named Piece, a smaller drama, complete within itself, but pertaining to the Second Part of *Faust*, shall be forthwith presented in the First Portion of my Works.

"The wide chasm between that well-known dolorous conclusion of the First Part, and the entrance of an antique Grecian Heroine, is not yet overarched; meanwhile, as a preamble, my readers will accept what follows: —

"The old Legend tells us, and the Puppet-play fails not to introduce the scene, that Faust, in his imperious pride of heart, required from Mephistopheles the love of the fair Helena of Greece; in which demand the other, after some reluctance, gratified him. Not to overlook so important a concern in our work was a duty for us: and how we have endeavored to discharge it, will be seen in this Interlude. But what may have furnished the proximate occasion of such an occurrence, and how, after manifold hindrances, our old magical Craftsman can have found means to bring back the individual Helena, in person, out of Orcus into Life, must, in this stage of the business, remain undiscovered. For the present, it is enough if our reader will admit that the real Helena may step forth, on antique tragedy-cothurnus, before her primitive abode in Sparta. We then request him to observe in what way and manner Faust will presume to court favor from this royal all-famous Beauty of the world."

To manage so unexampled a courtship will be admitted to be no easy task; for the mad hero's prayer must here be fulfilled to its largest extent, before the business can proceed a step; and the gods, it is certain, are not in the habit of annihilating time and space, even to make "two lovers happy." Our Marlowe was not ignorant of this mysterious *liaison* of Faust's: however, he slurs it over briefly, and without fronting the difficulty: Helena merely flits across the scene as an airy pageant, without speech or personality, and makes the lovesick philosopher "immortal by a kiss." Probably there are not many that would grudge Faust such immortality; we at least nowise envy him: for who does not see that this, in all human probability, is no real Helena, but only some hollow phantasm attired in her shape; while the true Daughter of Leda still dwells afar off in the inane kingdoms of Dis, and heeds not and hears not the most potent invocations of black-art? Another matter it is to call forth the frail fair one in very deed; not in form only, but in soul and life, the *same* Helena whom the Son of Atreus wedded, and for whose sake Ilion ceased to be. For Faust must behold this Wonder, not as she seemed, but as she was; and at his unearthly desire the Past shall become Present; and the antique Time must be new-created, and give back its persons and circumstances, though so long since reingulfed in the silence of the blank bygone Eternity! However, Mephistopheles is a cunning genius; and will not start at common obstacles. Perhaps, indeed, he is Metaphysician enough to know that Time and Space are but quiddities, not entities; *forms* of the human soul, Laws of Thought, which to us appear independent existences, but, out of our brain, have no existence whatever: in which case the whole nodus may be more of a logical cobweb than any actual material perplexity. Let us see how he unravels it, or cuts it.

The scene is Greece; not our poor oppressed Ottoman Morea, but the old heroic Hellas; for the sun again shines on Sparta, and "Tyndarus' high House" stands here bright, massive and entire, among its mountains, as when Menelaus revisited it, wearied with his ten years of warfare and eight of sea-roving. Helena appears in front of the Palace, with a Chorus of captive Trojan maidens. These are but Shades, we know, summoned from the deep realms of Hades, and embodied for the nonce: but the Conjurer has so managed it, that they themselves have no consciousness of this their true and highly precarious state of existence: the intermediate three thousand years have been obliterated, or compressed into a point; and these fair figures, on revisiting the upper air, entertain not the slightest suspicion that they had ever left it, or, indeed, that anything special had happened; save only that they had just disembarked from the Spartan ships, and been sent forward by Menelaus to provide for his reception, which is shortly to follow. All these indispensable preliminaries, it would appear, Mephistopheles has arranged with considerable success. Of the poor Shades, and their entire ignorance, he is so sure, that he would not scruple to cross-question them on this very point, so ticklish for his whole enterprise; nay, cannot forbear, now and then, throwing out malicious hints to mystify Helena herself, and raise the strangest doubts as to her personal identity. Thus on one occasion, as we shall see, he reminds her of a scandal which had gone abroad of her being a *double* personage, of her living with King Proteus in Egypt at the very time when she lived with Beau Paris in Troy; and, what is more extraordinary still, of her having been dead, and married to Achilles afterwards in the Island of Leuce! Helena admits that it is the most inexplicable thing on earth; can only conjecture that "she a Vision was joined to him a Vision;" and then sinks into a reverie or swoon in the arms of the Chorus. In this way can the nether-world Scapin sport with the perplexed Beauty; and by sly practice make her show us the secret, which is unknown to herself!

For the present, however, there is no thought of such scruples. Helena and her maidens, far from doubting that they are real authentic denizens of this world, feel themselves in a deep embarrassment about its concerns. From the dialogue, in long Alexandrines, or choral Recitative, we soon gather that matters wear a threatening aspect. Helena salutes her paternal and nuptial mansion in such style as may beseem an erring wife, returned from so eventful an elopement; alludes with charitable lenience to her frailty; which, indeed, it would seem, was nothing but the merest accident, for she had simply gone to pay her vows, "according to sacred wont," in the temple of Cytherea, when the "Phrygian robber" seized her; and farther informs us that the Immortals still foreshow to her a dubious future: —

> "For seldom, in our swift ship, did my husband deign
> To look on me; and word of comfort spake he none.
> As if a-brooding mischief, there he silent sat;
> Until, when steered into Eurotas' bending bay,
> The first ships with their prows but kissed the land,
> He rose, and said, as by the voice of gods inspired:
> Here will I that my warriors, troop by troop, disbark;
> I muster them, in battle-order, on the ocean-strand.
> But thou, go forward, up Eurotas' sacred bank,
> Guiding the steeds along the flower-besprinkled space,
> Till thou arrive on the fair plain where Lacedæmon,
> Erewhile a broad fruit-bearing field, has piled its roofs
> Amid the mountains, and sends up the smoke of hearths.
> Then enter thou the high-towered Palace; call the Maids
> I left at parting, and the wise old Stewardess:
> With her inspect the Treasures which thy father left,
> And I, in war or peace still adding, have heaped up.
> Thou findest all in order standing; for it is
> The prince's privilege to see, at his return,
> Each household item as it was, and where it was;
> For of himself the slave hath power to alter nought."

It appears, moreover, that Menelaus has given her directions to prepare for a solemn Sacrifice: the ewers, the pateras, the altar, the axe, dry wood, are all to be in readiness; only of the victim there was no mention; a circumstance from which Helena fails not to draw some rather alarming surmises. However, reflecting that all issues rest with the higher Powers, and that, in any case, irresolution and procrastination will avail her nothing, she at length determines on this grand enterprise of entering the palace, to make a general review; and enters accordingly. But long before any such business could have been finished, she hastily returns, with a frustrated, nay terrified aspect; much to the astonishment of her Chorus, who pressingly inquire the cause.

HELENA, *who has left the door-leaves open, agitated.*

Beseems not that Jove's daughter shrink with common fright,
Nor by the brief cold touch of Fear be chilled and stunned.
Yet the Horror, which ascending, in the womb of Night,
From deeps of Chaos, rolls itself together many-shaped,
Like glowing Clouds, from out the mountain's fire-throat,
In threatening ghastliness, may shake even heroes' hearts.
So have the Stygian here to-day appointed me
A welcome to my native Mansion, such that fain
From the oft-trod, long-wished-for threshold, like a guest
That has took leave, I would withdraw my steps for aye.
But no! Retreated have I to the light, nor shall
Ye farther force me, angry Powers, be who ye may.
New expiations will I use; then purified,
The blaze of the Hearth may greet the Mistress as the Lord.

PANTHALIS THE CHORAGE.[1]

Discover, noble queen, to us thy handmaidens,
That wait by thee in love, what misery has befallen.

HELENA.

What I have seen, ye too with your own eyes shall see,
If Night have not already suck'd her Phantoms back
To the abysses of her wonder-bearing breast.
Yet, would ye know this thing, I tell it you in words.
When bent on present duty, yet with anxious thought,
I solemnly set foot in these high royal Halls,
The silent, vacant passages astounded me;
For tread of hasty footsteps nowhere met the ear,
Nor bustle as of busy menial-work the eye.
No maid comes forth to me, no Stewardess, such as
Still wont with friendly welcome to salute all guests.

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[1] Leader of the Chorus.

But as, alone advancing, I approach the Hearth,
There, by the ashy remnant of dim outburnt coals,
Sits, crouching on the ground, up-muffled, some huge Crone;
Not as in sleep she sat, but as in drowsy muse.
With ordering voice I bid her rise; nought doubting 't was
The Stewardess the King, at parting hence, had left.
But, heedless, shrunk together, sits she motionless;
And as I chid, at last outstretch'd her lean right arm,
As if she beckoned me from hall and hearth away.
I turn indignant from her, and hasten out forthwith
Towards the steps whereon aloft the Thalamos
Adorned rises; and near by it the Treasure-room;
When, lo, the Wonder starts abruptly from the floor;
Imperious, barring my advance, displays herself
In haggard stature, hollow bloodshot eyes; a shape
Of hideous strangeness, to perplex all sight and thought.
But I discourse to the air: for words in vain attempt
To body forth to sight the form that dwells in us.
There see herself! She ventures forward to the light!
Here we are masters till our Lord and King shall come.
The ghastly births of Night, Apollo, beauty's friend,
Disperses back to their abysses, or subdues.

PHORCYAS *enters on the threshold, between the door-posts.*

CHORUS.

Much have I seen, and strange, though the ringlets
Youthful and thick still wave round my temples:
Terrors a many, war and its horrors
Witnessed I once in Ilion's night,
When it fell.
Thorough the clanging, cloudy-covered din of
Onrushing warriors, heard I th' Immortals
Shouting in anger, heard I Bellona's
Iron-toned voice resound from without
City-wards.

Ah! the City yet stood, with its
Bulwarks; Ilion safely yet
Towered: but spreading from house over
House, the flame did begirdle us;
Sea-like, red, loud and billowy;

Hither, thither, as tempest-floods,
Over the death-circled City.

Flying, saw I, through heat and through
Gloom and glare of that fire-ocean,
Shapes of Gods in their wrathfulness,
Stalking grim, fierce and terrible,
Giant-high, through the luridly
Flame-dyed dusk of that vapor.

Did I see it, or was it but
Terror of heart that fashioned
Forms so affrighting? Know can I
Never: but here that I view this
Horrible Thing with my own eyes,
This of a surety believe I:
Yea, I could clutch 't in my fingers,
Did not, from Shape so dangerous,
Fear at a distance keep me.

Which of old Phorcys'
Daughters then art thou?
For I compare thee to
That generation.
Art thou belike of the Graiæ,
Gray-born, one eye and one tooth
Using alternate,
Child or descendant?

Darest thou, Haggard,
Close by such beauty,
'Fore the divine glance of
Phœbus display thee?
But display as it pleases thee;
For the ugly he heedeth not,
As his bright eye yet never did
Look on a shadow.

But us mortals, alas for it!
Law of Destiny burdens us
With the unspeakable eye-sorrow
Which such a sight, unblessed, detestable,
Doth in lovers of beauty awaken.

Nay then, hear, since thou shamelessly
Com'st forth fronting us, hear only
Curses, hear all manner of threatenings,
Out of the scornful lips of the happier
That were made by the Deities.

PHORCYAS.

Old is the saw, but high and true remains its sense,
That Shame and Beauty ne'er, together hand in hand,
Were seen pursue their journey over the earth's green path.
Deep-rooted dwells an ancient hatred in these two;
So that wherever, on their way, one haps to meet
The other, each on its adversary turns its back;
Then hastens forth the faster on its separate road;
Shame all in sorrow, Beauty pert and light of mood;
Till the hollow night of Orcus catches it at length,
If age and wrinkles have not tamed it long before.
So you, ye wantons, wafted hither from strange lands,
I find in tumult, like the cranes' hoarse jingling flight,
That over our heads, in long-drawn cloud, sends down
Its creaking gabble, and tempts the silent wanderer that he look
Aloft at them a moment: but they go their way,
And he goes his; so also will it be with us.

Who then are ye, that here, in Bacchanalian wise,
Like drunk ones, ye dare uproar at this Palace-gate?
Who then are ye, that at the Stewardess of the King's House
Ye howl, as at the moon the crabbed brood of dogs?
Think ye 't is hid from me what manner of thing ye are?
Ye war-begotten, fight-bred, feather-headed crew!
Lascivious crew, seducing as seduced, that waste,
In rioting, alike the soldier's and the burgher's strength!
Here seeing you gathered, seems as a cicada-swarm
Had lighted, covering the herbage of the fields.
Consumers ye of other's thrift, ye greedy-mouthed
Quick squanderers of fruits men gain by tedious toil;
Cracked market-ware, stol'n, bought, and bartered troop of slaves!

We have thought it right to give so much of these singular expositions and altercations, in the words, as far as might be, of the parties themselves; happy could we, in any measure, have transfused the broad, yet rich and chaste simplicity of these long iambics; or imitated the tone, as we have done the metre, of that choral song; its rude earnestness, and tortuous, awkward-looking, artless strength, as we have done its dactyls and anapæsts. The task was no easy one; and we remain, as might have been expected, little contented with our efforts; having, indeed, nothing to boast of, except a sincere fidelity to the original. If the reader, through such distortion, can obtain any glimpse of *Helena* itself, he will not only pardon us, but thank us. To our own minds, at least, there is everywhere a strange, piquant, quite peculiar charm in these imitations of the old Grecian style: a dash of the ridiculous, if we might say so, is blended with the sublime, yet blended with it softly, and only to temper its austerity; for often, so graphic is the delineation, we could almost feel as if a vista were opened through the long gloomy distance of ages, and we, with our modern eyes and modern levity, beheld afar off, in clear light, the very figures of that old grave time; saw them again living in their old antiquarian costume and environment, and heard them audibly discourse in a dialect which had long been dead.

Of all this no man is more master than Goethe: as a modern-antique, his *Iphigenie* must be considered unrivalled in poetry. A similar thoroughly classical spirit will be found in this First Part of *Helena;* yet the manner of the two pieces is essentially different. Here, we should say, we are more reminded of Sophocles, perhaps of Æschylus, than of Euripides: it is more rugged, copious, energetic, inartificial; a still more ancient style. How very primitive, for instance, are Helena and Phorcyas in their whole deportment here! How frank and downright in speech; above all, how minute and specific; no glimpse of "philosophical culture;" no such thing as a "general idea;" thus, every different object seems a new unknown one, and requires to be separately stated. In like manner, what can be more honest and edifying than the chant of the Chorus? With what inimitable *naïveté* they recur to the sack of Troy, and endeavor to convince themselves that they do actually see this "horrible Thing;" then lament the law of Destiny which dooms them to such "unspeakable eye-sorrow;" and, finally, break forth into sheer cursing; to all which Phorcyas answers in the like free and plain-spoken fashion.

But to our story. This hard-tempered and so dreadfully ugly old lady, the reader cannot help suspecting, at first sight, to be some cousin-german of Mephistopheles, or indeed that great Actor of all Work himself; which latter suspicion the devilish nature of the beldame, by degrees, confirms into a moral certainty. There is a sarcastic malice in the "wise old Stewardess" which cannot be mistaken. Meanwhile the Chorus and the beldame indulge still farther in mutual abuse; she upbraiding them with their giddiness and wanton disposition; they chanting unabatedly her extreme deficiency in personal charms. Helena, however, interposes; and the old Gorgon, pretending that she has not till now recognized the stranger to be her Mistress, smooths herself into gentleness, affects the greatest humility, and even appeals to her for protection against the insolence of these young ones. But wicked Phorcyas is only waiting her opportunity; still neither unwilling to wound, nor afraid to strike. Helena, to expel some unpleasant vapors of doubt, is reviewing her past history, in concert with Phorcyas; and observes, that the latter had been appointed Stewardess by Menelaus, on his return from his Cretan expedition to Sparta. No sooner is Sparta mentioned, than the crone, with an officious air of helping out the story, adds: —

Which thou forsookest, Ilion's tower-encircled town
Preferring, and the unexhausted joys of Love.

HELENA.

Remind me not of joys; an all-too heavy woe's
Infinitude soon followed, crushing breast and heart.

PHORCYAS.

But I have heard thou livest on earth a double life;
In Ilion seen, and seen the while in Egypt too.

HELENA.

Confound not so the weakness of my weary sense:
Here even, who or what I am, I know it not.

PHORCYAS.

Then I have heard how, from the hollow Realm of Shades,
Achilles too did fervently unite himself to thee;
Thy earlier love reclaiming, spite of all Fate's laws.

HELENA.

To him the Vision, I a Vision joined myself:
It was a dream, the very words may teach us this.
But I am faint; and to myself a Vision grow.
[*Sinks into the arms of one division of the Chorus.*

CHORUS.

Silence! silence!
Evil-eyed, evil-tongued, thou!
Through so shrivelled-up, one-tooth'd a
Mouth, what good can come from that
Throat of horrors detestable —

— In which style they continue musically rating her, till "Helena has recovered, and again stands in the middle of the chorus;" when Phorcyas, with the most wheedling air, hastens to greet her, in a new sort of verse, as if nothing whatever had happened: —

PHORCYAS.

Issues forth from passing cloud the sun of this bright day:
If when veil'd she so could charm us, now her beams in splendor blind.
As the world doth look before thee, in such gentle wise thou look'st.
Let them call me so unlovely, what is lovely know I well.

HELENA.

Come so wavering from the Void which in that faintness circled me,
Glad I were to rest again a space; so weary are my limbs.
Yet it well becometh queens, all mortals it becometh well,
To possess their hearts in patience, and await what can betide.

PHORCYAS.

Whilst thou standest in thy greatness, in thy beauty here,
Says thy look that thou commandest: what command'st thou? Speak
it out.

HELENA.

To conclude your quarrel's idle loitering be prepared:
Haste, arrange the Sacrifice the King commanded me.

PHORCYAS.

All is ready in the Palace, bowl and tripod, sharp-ground axe;
For besprinkling, for befuming: now the Victim let us see.

HELENA.

This the King appointed not.

PHORCYAS.

Spoke not of this? O word of woe!

HELENA.

What strange sorrow overpowers thee?

PHORCYAS.

Queen, 't is thou he meant.

HELENA.

I!

PHORCYAS.

And these.

CHORUS.

O woe! O woe!

PHORCYAS.

Thou fallest by the axe's stroke.

HELENA.

Horrible, yet look'd for: hapless I!

PHORCYAS.

Inevitable seems it me.

CHORUS.

Ah, and us? What will become of us?

PHORCYAS.

She dies a noble death:
Ye, on the high Beam within that bears the rafters and the roof,
As in birding-time so many woodlarks, in a row, shall sprawl.
[*Helena and Chorus stand astounded and terror-struck; in expressive, well-concerted grouping.*

Poor spectres! — All like frozen statues there ye stand,
In fright to leave the Day which not belongs to you.
No man or spectre, more than you, is fond to quit
The Upper Light; yet rescue, respite finds not one:
All know it, all believe it, few delight in it.
Enough, 't is over with you! And so let 's to work!

How the cursed old beldame enjoys the agony of these poor Shades; nay, we suspect, she is laughing in her sleeve at the very Classicism of this Drama, which she herself has contrived, and is even now helping to enact! Observe, she has quitted her octameter trochaics again, and taken to plain blank verse; a sign, perhaps, that she is getting weary of the whole Classical concern! But however this may be, she now claps her hands; whereupon certain distorted dwarf figures appear at the door, and, with great speed and agility, at her order, bring forth the sacrificial apparatus; on which she fails not to descant demonstratively, explaining the purpose of the several articles as they are successively fitted up before her. Here is the "gold-horned altar," the "axe glittering over its silver edge;" then there must be "water-urns to wash the black blood's defilement," and a "precious mat" to kneel on, for the victim is to be beheaded queenlike. On all hands, mortal horror! But Phorcyas hints darkly that there is still a way of escape left; this, of course, every one is in deepest eagerness to learn. Here, one would think, she might for once come to the point without digression: but Phorcyas has her own way of stating a fact. She thus commences: —

PHORCYAS.

Whoso, collecting store of wealth, at home abides
To parget in due season his high dwelling's walls,

And prudent guard his roof from inroad of the rain,
With him, through long still years of life, it shall be well.
But he who lightly, in his folly, bent to rove,
O'ersteps with wand'ring foot his threshold's sacred line,
Will find, at his return, the ancient place indeed
Still there, but else all alter'd, if not overthrown.

HELENA.

Why these trite saws? Thou wert to teach us, not reprove.

PHORCYAS.

Historical it is, is nowise a reproof.
Sea-roving, steer'd King Menelaus brisk from bay to bay;
Descended on all ports and isles, a plundering foe,
And still came back with booty, which yet moulders here.
Then by the walls of Ilion spent he ten long years;
How many in his homeward voyage were hard to know.
But all this while how stands it here with Tyndarus'
High house? How stands it with his own domains around?

HELENA.

Is love of railing, then, so interwoven with thee,
That thus, except to chide, thou can'st not move thy lips?

PHORCYAS.

So many years forsaken stood the mountain glen,
Which, north from Sparta, towards the higher land ascends
Behind Taygetus; where, as yet a merry brook,
Eurotas gurgles on, and then, along our Vale,
In sep'rate streams abroad outflowing feeds your Swans.
There, backwards in the rocky hills, a daring race
Have fix'd themselves, forth issuing from Cimmerian Night:
An inexpugnable stronghold have piled aloft,
From which they harry land and people as they please.

HELENA.

How could they? All impossible it seems to me.

PHORCYAS.

Enough of time they had: 't is haply twenty years.

HELENA.

Is One the Master? Are there Robbers many; leagued?

PHORCYAS.

Not Robbers these: yet many, and the Master One.
Of him I say no ill, though hither too he came.
What might not he have took? yet did content himself
With some small Present, so he called it, Tribute not.

HELENA.

How looks he?

PHORCYAS.

Nowise ill! To me he pleasant look'd.
A jocund, gallant, hardy, handsome man it is,
And rational in speech, as of the Greeks are few.
We call the folk Barbarian; yet I question much
If one there be so cruel, as at Ilion
Full many of our best heroes man-devouring were.
I do respect his greatness, and confide in him.
And for his Tower! this with your own eyes ye should see:
Another thing it is than clumsy boulder-work,
Such as our Fathers, nothing scrupling, huddled up,
Cyclopean, and like Cyclops-builders, one rude crag
On other rude crags tumbling: in that Tow'r of theirs
'T is plumb and level all, and done by square and rule.
Look on it from without! Heav'nward it soars on high,
So straight, so tight of joint, and mirror-smooth as steel:
To clamber there — Nay, even your very Thought slides down, —
And then, within, such courts, broad spaces, all around,
With masonry encompass'd of every sort and use:
There have ye arches, archlets, pillars, pillarlets,
Balconies, galleries, for looking out and in,
And coats of arms.

CHORUS.

Of arms? What mean'st thou?

PHORCYAS.

Ajax bore
A twisted Snake on his Shield, as ye yourselves have seen.
The Seven also before Thebes bore carved work
Each on his Shield; devices rich and full of sense:
There saw ye moon and stars of the nightly heaven's vault,
And goddesses, and heroes, ladders, torches, swords,
And dangerous tools, such as in storm o'erfall good towns.

Escutcheons of like sort our heroes also bear:
There see ye lions, eagles, claws besides, and bills,
Then buffalo-horns, and wings, and roses, peacock-tails;
And bandelets, gold and black and silver, blue and red.
Such like are there hung up in Halls, row after row;
In halls, so large, so lofty, boundless as the World;
There might ye dance!

CHORUS.

Ha! Tell us, are there dancers there?

PHORCYAS.

The best on earth! A golden-hair'd, fresh, younker band,
They breathe of youth; Paris alone so breath'd when to
Our Queen he came too near.

HELENA.

Thou quite dost lose
The tenor of thy story: say me thy last word.

PHORCYAS.

Thyself wilt say it: say in earnest, audibly, Yes!
Next moment, I surround thee with that Tow'r.

The step is questionable: for is not this Phorcyas a person of the most suspicious character; or rather, is it not certain that she is a Turk in grain, and will, almost of a surety, go how it may, turn good into bad? And yet, what is to be done? A trumpet, said to be that of Menelaus, sounds in the distance; at which the Chorus shrink together in increased terror. Phorcyas coldly reminds them of Deiphobus with his slit nose, as a small token of Menelaus's turn of thinking on these matters; supposes, however, that there is now nothing for it but to wait the issue, and die with propriety. Helena has no wish to die, either with propriety or impropriety; she pronounces, though with a faltering resolve, the definitive Yes. A burst of joy breaks from the Chorus; thick fog rises all round; in the midst of which, as we learn from their wild tremulous chant, they feel themselves hurried through the air: Eurotas is swept from sight, and the cry of its Swans fades ominously away in the distance; for now, as we suppose, "Tyndarus' high House," with all its appendages, is rushing back into the depths of the Past; old *Lacedæmon* has again become new *Misitra;* only Taygetus, with another name, remains unchanged: and the King of Rivers feeds among his sedges quite a different race of Swans from those of Leda! The mist is passing away, but yet, to the horror of the Chorus, no clear daylight returns. Dim masses rise round them: Phorcyas has vanished. Is it a castle? Is it a cavern? They find themselves in the "Interior Court of the Tower, surrounded with rich fantastic buildings of the Middle Ages!"

If, hitherto, we have moved along, with considerable convenience, over ground singular enough indeed, yet, the nature of it once understood, affording firm footing and no unpleasant scenery, we come now to a strange mixed element, in which it seems as if neither walking, swimming, nor even flying, could rightly avail us. We have cheerfully admitted, and honestly believed, that Helena and her Chorus were Shades; but now they appear to be changing into mere Ideas, mere Metaphors, or poetic Thoughts! Faust too — for *he,* as every one sees, must be lord of this Fortress — is a much-altered man since we last met him. Nay sometimes we could fancy he were only *acting a part* on this occasion; were a mere mummer, representing not so much his own natural *personality,* as some shadow and impersonation of his *history;* not so much his own Faustship, as the tradition of Faust's adventures, and the Genius of the People among whom this took its rise. For, indeed, he has strange gifts of flying through the air, and living, in apparent friendship and contentment, with mere Eidolons; and, being excessively reserved withal, he becomes not a little enigmatic. In fact, our whole "Interlude" changes its character at this point: the Greek style passes abruptly into the Spanish; at one bound we have left the *Seven before Thebes,* and got into the *Vida es Sueño.* The action, too, becomes more and more typical; or rather, we should say, half-typical; for it will neither hold rightly together as allegory nor as matter of fact.

Thus do we see ourselves hesitating on the verge of a wondrous region, "neither sea nor good dry land;" full of shapes and musical tones, but all dim, fluctuating, unsubstantial, chaotic. Danger there is that the critic may require "both oar and sail;" nay, it will be well if, like that other great Traveller, he meet not some vast vacuity, where, all unawares,

> "Fluttering his pennons vain, plumb down he drop
> Ten thousand fathom deep . . . ."

and so keep falling till

> "The strong rebuff of some tumultuous cloud,
> Instinct with fire and nitre, hurry him
> As many miles aloft . . . ."

— Meaning, probably, that he is to be "blown up" by nonplused and justly exasperated Review-reviewers! — Nevertheless, unappalled by these possibilities, we venture forward into this impalpable Limbo; and must endeavor to render such account of the "sensible species" and "ghosts of defunct bodies" we may meet there, as shall be moderately satisfactory to the reader.

In the little Notice from the Author, quoted above, we were bid specially observe in what way and manner Faust would presume to court this World-beauty. We must say, his style of gallantry seems to us of the most chivalrous and high-flown description, if indeed it is not a little *euphuistic.* In their own eyes, Helena and her Chorus, encircled in this Gothic court, appear, for some minutes, no better than captives; but, suddenly issuing from galleries and portals, and descending the stairs in stately procession, are seen a numerous suite of Pages, whose gay habiliments and red downy cheeks are greatly admired by the Chorus: these bear with them a throne and canopy, with footstools and cushions, and every other necessary apparatus of royalty; the portable machine, as we gather from the Chorus, is soon put together; and Helena, being reverently beckoned into the same, is thus forthwith constituted Sovereign of the whole Establishment. To herself such royalty still seems a little dubious; but no sooner have the Pages, in long train, fairly descended, than "Faust appears above, on the stairs, in knightly court-dress of the Middle Ages, and with deliberate dignity comes down," astonishing the poor "feather-headed" Chorus with the gracefulness of his deportment and his more than human beauty. He leads with him a culprit in fetters; and, by way of introduction, explains to Helena that this man, Lynceus, has deserved death by his misconduct; but that to her, as Queen of the Castle, must appertain the right of dooming or of pardoning him. The crime of Lynceus is, indeed, of an extraordinary nature: he was Warder of the tower; but now, though gifted, as his name imports, with the keenest vision, he has failed in warning Faust that so august a visitor was approaching, and thus occasioned the most dreadful breach of politeness. Lynceus pleads guilty: quick-sighted as a lynx, in usual cases, he has been blinded with excess of light, in this instance. While looking towards the orient at the "course of morning," he noticed a "sun rise wonderfully in the south," and, all his senses taken captive by such surprising beauty, he no longer knew his right hand from his left, or could move a limb, or utter a word, to announce her arrival. Under these peculiar circumstances, Helena sees room for extending the royal prerogative; and after expressing unfeigned regret at this so fatal influence of her charms over the whole male sex, dismisses the Warder with a reprieve. We must beg our readers to keep an eye on this Innamorato; for there may be meaning in him. Here is the pleading, which produced so fine an effect, given in his own words:

Let me kneel and let me view her,
Let me live, or let me die,
Slave to this high woman, truer
Than a bondsman born, am I.

Watching o'er the course of morning,
Eastward, as I mark it run,
Rose there, all the sky adorning,
Strangely in the south a sun.

Draws my look towards those places,
Not the valley, not the height,
Not the earth's or heaven's spaces;
She alone the queen of light.

Eyesight truly hath been lent me,
Like the lynx on highest tree;
Boots not; for amaze hath shent me:
Do I dream, or do I see?

Knew I aught; or could I ever
Think of tow'r or bolted gate?
Vapors waver, vapors sever,
Such a goddess comes in state!

Eye and heart I must surrender
Drown'd as in a radiant sea;
That high creature with her splendor
Blinding all hath blinded me.

I forgot the warder's duty;
Trumpet, challenge, word of call:
Chain me, threaten: sure this Beauty
Stills thy anger, saves her thrall.

Save him accordingly she did: but no sooner is he dismissed, and Faust has made a remark on the multitude of "arrows" which she is darting forth on all sides, than Lynceus returns in a still madder humor. "Re-enter Lynceus with a Chest, and Men carrying other Chests behind him."

LYNCEUS.

Thou see'st me, Queen, again advance.
The wealthy begs of thee one glance;
He look'd at thee, and feels e'er since
As beggar poor, and rich as prince.

What was I erst? What am I grown?
What have I meant, or done, or known?
What boots the sharpest force of eyes?
Back from thy throne it baffled flies.

From Eastward marching came we on,
And soon the West was lost and won:
A long broad army forth we pass'd,
The foremost knew not of the last.

The first did fall, the second stood,
The third hew'd in with falchion good;
And still the next had prowess more,
Forgot the thousands slain before.

We stormed along, we rushed apace,
The masters we from place to place;
And where I lordly ruled to-day,
To-morrow another did rob and slay.

We look'd; our choice was quickly made;
This snatch'd with him the fairest maid,
That seiz'd the steer for burden bent,
The horses all and sundry went.

But I did love apart to spy
The rarest things could meet the eye:
Whate'er in others' hands I saw,
That was for me but chaff and straw.

For treasures did I keep a look,
My keen eyes pierc'd to every nook;
Into all pockets I could see,
Transparent each strong-box to me.

And heaps of Gold I gained this way,
And precious Stones of clearest ray: —
Now where 's the Diamond meet to shine?
'T is meet alone for breast like thine.

So let the Pearl from depths of sea,
In curious stringlets wave on thee:
The Ruby for some covert seeks,
'T is paled by redness of thy cheeks.

And so the richest treasure 's brought
Before thy throne, as best it ought;
Beneath thy feet here let me lay
The fruit of many a bloody fray.

So many chests we now do bear;
More chests I have, and finer ware:
Think me but to be near thee worth,
Whole treasure-vaults I empty forth.

For scarcely art thou hither sent,
All hearts and wills to thee are bent;
Our riches, reason, strength we must
Before the loveliest lay as dust.

All this I reckon'd great, and mine,
Now small I reckon it, and thine.
I thought it worthy, high and good;
'T is nought, poor and misunderstood.

So dwindles what my glory was,
A heap of mown and withered grass:
What worth it had, and now does lack,
Oh, with one kind look, give it back!

FAUST.

Away! away! take back the bold-earn'd load,
Not blam'd indeed, but also not rewarded.
Hers is already whatsoe'er our Tower
Of costliness conceals. Go heap me treasures
On treasures, yet with order: let the blaze
Of pomp unspeakable appear; the ceilings
Gem-fretted, shine like skies; a Paradise
Of lifeless life create. Before her feet
Unfolding quick, let flow'ry carpet roll
Itself from flow'ry carpet, that her step
May light on softness, and her eye meet nought
But splendor blinding only not the Gods.

LYNCEUS.

Small is what our Lord doth say;
Servants do it; 't is but play:
For o'er all we do or dream
Will this Beauty reign supreme.
Is not all our host grown tame?
Every sword is blunt and lame.
To a form of such a mould
Sun himself is dull and cold
To the richness of that face;
What is beauty, what is grace,
Loveliness we saw or thought?
All is empty, all is nought.

And herewith *exit* Lynceus, and we see no more of him! We have said that we thought there might be method in this madness. In fact, the allegorical, or at least fantastic and figurative, character of the whole action is growing more and more decided every moment. Helena, we must conjecture, is, in the course of this her real historical intrigue with Faust, to present, at the same time, some dim adumbration of Grecian Art, and its flight to the Northern Nations, when driven by stress of War from its own country. Faust's Tower will, in this case, afford not only a convenient station for *lifting black-mail* over the neighboring district, but a cunning, though vague and fluctuating, emblem of the Product of Teutonic Mind; the Science, Art, Institutions of the Northmen, of whose Spirit and Genius he himself may in some degree become the representative. In this way the extravagant homage and admiration paid to Helena are not without their meaning. The manner of her arrival, enveloped as she was in thick clouds, and frightened onwards by hostile trumpets, may also have more or less propriety. And who is Lynceus, the mad Watchman? We cannot but suspect him of being a Schoolman Philosopher, or School Philosophy itself, in disguise; and that this wonderful "march" of his has a covert allusion to the great "march of intellect," which did march in those old ages, though only "at ordinary time." We observe, the military, one after the other, all fell; for discoverers, like other men, must die; but "still the next had prowess more," and forgot the thousands that had sunk in clearing the way for him. However, Lynceus, in his love of plunder, did not take "the fairest maid," nor "the steer" fit for burden, but rather jewels and other rare articles of value; in which quest his high power of eyesight proved of great service to him. Better had it been, perhaps, to have done as others did, and seized "the fairest maid," or even the "steer" fit for burden, or one of the "horses" which were in such request: for, when he quitted practical Science and the philosophy of Life, and addicted himself to curious subtleties and Metaphysical crotchets, what did it avail him? At the first glance of the Grecian beauty, he found that it was "nought, poor and misunderstood." His extraordinary obscuration of vision on Helena's approach; his narrow escape from death, on that account, at the hands of Faust; his pardon by the fair Greek: his subsequent magnanimous offer to her, and discourse with his master on the subject, — might give rise to various considerations. But we must not loiter, questioning the strange Shadows of that strange country, who, besides, are apt to mystify one. Our nearest business is to get across it: we again proceed.

Whoever or whatever Faust and Helena may be, they are evidently fast rising into high favor with each other; as indeed, from so generous a gallant, and so fair a dame, was to be anticipated. She invites him to sit with her on the throne, so instantaneously acquired by force of her charms; to which graceful proposal he, after kissing her hand in knightly wise, fails not to accede. The courtship now advances apace. Helena admires the dialect of Lynceus, and how "one word seemed to kiss the other," — for the Warder, as we saw, speaks in doggerel; and she cannot but wish that she also had some such talent. Faust assures her that nothing is more easy than this same practice of rhyme: it is but speaking right from the heart, and the rest follows of course. Withal he proposes that they should make a trial of it themselves. The experiment succeeds to mutual satisfaction: for not only can they two build the lofty rhyme in concert, with all convenience, but, in the course of a page or two of such crambo, many love-tokens come to light; nay we find by the Chorus that the wooing has well-nigh reached a happy end: at least, the two are "sitting near and nearer each other, — shoulder on shoulder, knee by knee, hand in hand, they are swaying over the throne's up-cushioned lordliness;" which, surely, are promising symptoms.

Such ill-timed dalliance is abruptly disturbed by the entrance of Phorcyas, now, as ever, a messenger of evil, with malignant tidings that Menelaus is at hand, with his whole force, to storm the Castle, and ferociously avenge his new injuries. An immense "explosion of signals from the towers, of trumpets, clarions, military music, and the march of numerous armies," confirms the news. Faust, however, treats the matter coolly; chides the unceremonious trepidation of Phorcyas, and summons his men of war; who accordingly enter, steel-clad, in military pomp, and quitting their battalions, gather round him to take his orders. In a wild Pindaric ode, delivered with due emphasis, he directs them not so much how they are to conquer Menelaus, whom doubtless he knows to be a sort of dream, as how they are respectively to manage and partition the Country they shall hereby acquire. Germanus is to have the "bays of Corinth;" while "Achaia, with its hundred dells," is recommended to the care of Goth; the host of the Franks must go towards Elis; Messene is to be the Saxon's share; and Normann is to clear the seas, and make Argolis great. Sparta, however, is to continue the territory of Helena, and be queen and patroness of these inferior Dukedoms. In all this, are we to trace some faint changeful shadow of the National Character, and respective Intellectual Performance of the several European tribes? Or, perhaps, of the real History of the Middle Ages; the irruption of the northern swarms, issuing, like Faust and his air-warriors, "from Cimmerian Night," and spreading over so many fair regions? Perhaps of both, and of more; perhaps properly of neither: for the whole has a chameleon character, changing hue as we look on it. However, be this as it may, the Chorus cannot sufficiently admire Faust's strategic faculty; and the troops march off, without speech indeed, but evidently in the highest spirits. He himself concludes with another rapid dithyrambic, describing the Peninsula of Greece, or rather, perhaps, typically the Region of true Poesy, "kissed by the sea-waters," and "knit to the last mountain-branch" of the firm land. There is a wild glowing fire in these two odes; a musical indistinctness, yet enveloping a rugged, keen sense, which, were the gift of rhyme so common as Faust thinks it, we should have pleasure in presenting to our readers. Again and again we think of Calderon and his *Life a Dream.*

Faust, as he resumes his seat by Helena, observes that "she is sprung from the highest gods, and belongs to the first world alone." It is not meet that bolted towers should encircle her; and near by Sparta, over the hills, "Arcadia blooms in eternal strength of youth, a blissful abode for them two." "Let thrones pass into groves: Arcadian-free be such felicity!" No sooner said than done. Our Fortress, we suppose, rushes asunder like a Palace of Air, for *the scene altogether changes. A series of Grottoes now are shut in by close Bowers. Shady Grove, to the foot of the Rocks which encircle the place. Faust and Helena are not seen. The Chorus, scattered around, lie sleeping.*"

In Arcadia, the business grows wilder than ever. Phorcyas, who has now become wonderfully civil, and, notwithstanding her ugliness, stands on the best footing with the poor light-headed cicada-swarm of a Chorus, awakes them to hear and see the wonders that have happened so shortly. It appears too, that there are certain "Bearded Ones" (we suspect, Devils) waiting with anxiety, "sitting watchful there below," to see the issue of this extraordinary transaction; but of these Phorcyas gives her silly women no hint whatever. She tells them, in glib phrase, what great things are in the wind. Faust and Helena have been happier than mortals in these grottoes. Phorcyas, who was in waiting, gradually glided away, seeking "roots, moss and rinds," on household duty bent, and so "they two remained alone."

CHORUS.

Talk 'st as if within those grottoes lay whole tracts of country,
Wood and meadow, rivers, lakes: what tales thou palm'st on us!

PHORCYAS.

Sure enough, ye foolish creatures! These are unexplored recesses;
Hall runs out on hall, spaces there on spaces: these I musing traced.
But at once re-echoes from within a peal of laughter:
Peeping in, what is it? Leaps a boy from Mother's breast to Father's,
From the Father to the Mother: such a fondling, such a dandling,
Foolish Love's caressing, teasing; cry of jest, and shriek of pleasure,
In their turn do stun me quite.
Naked, without wings a Genius, Faun in humor without coarseness,
Springs he sportful on the ground; but the ground reverberating,
Darts him up to airy heights; and at the third, the second gambol,
Touches he the vaulted Roof.

Frightened cries the Mother: Bound away, away, and as thou pleasest,
But, my Son, beware of Flying; wings nor power of flight are thine.
And the Father thus advises: In the Earth resides the virtue
Which so fast doth send thee upwards; touch but with thy toe the surface,
Like the Earth-born, old Antæus, straightway thou art strong again.
And so skips he hither, thither, on these jagged rocks; from summit
Still to summit, all about, like stricken ball rebounding, springs.

But at once in cleft of some rude cavern sinking has he vanished,
And so seems it we have lost him. Mother mourning, Father cheers her;
Shrug my shoulders I, and look about me. But again, behold what vision!
Are there treasures lying here concealed? There he is again, and garments
Glittering, flower-bestriped has on.
Tassels waver from his arms, about his bosom flutter breast-knots,
In his hand the golden Lyre; wholly like a little Phœbus,
Steps he light of heart upon the beetling cliffs: astonished stand we,
And the Parents, in their rapture, fly into each other's arms.
For what glittering 's that about his head? Were hard to say what glitters,
Whether Jewels and gold, or Flame of all-subduing strength of soul.

> And with such a bearing moves he, in himself this boy announces
> Future Master of all Beauty, whom the Melodies Eternal
> Do inform through every fibre; and forthwith so shall ye hear him,
> And forthwith so shall ye see him, to your uttermost amazement.

The Chorus suggest, in their simplicity, that this elastic little urchin may have some relationship to the "Son of Maia," who, in old times, whisked himself so nimbly out of his swaddling-clothes, and stole the "Sea-ruler's trident" and "Hephæstos' tongs," and various other articles, before he was well span-long. But Phorcyas declares all this to be superannuated fable, unfit for modern uses. And now "*a beautiful purely melodious music of stringed instruments resounds from the Cave. All listen, and soon appear deeply moved. It continues playing in full tone;*" while Euphorion, in person, makes his appearance, "*in the costume above described;*" larger of stature, but no less frolicsome and tuneful.

Our readers are aware that this Euphorion, the offspring of Northern Character wedded to Grecian Culture, frisks it here not without reference to Modern Poesy, which had a birth so precisely similar. Sorry are we that we cannot follow him through these fine warblings and trippings on the light fantastic toe: to our ears there is a quick, pure, small-toned music in them, as perhaps of elfin bells when the Queen of Faery rides by moonlight. It is, in truth, a graceful emblematic dance, this little life of Euphorion; full of meanings and half-meanings. The history of Poetry, traits of individual Poets; the Troubadours, the Three Italians; glimpses of all things, full vision of nothing! — Euphorion grows rapidly, and passes from one pursuit to another. Quitting his boyish gambols, he takes to dancing and romping with the Chorus; and this in a style of tumult which rather dissatisfies Faust. The wildest and coyest of these damsels he seizes with avowed intent of snatching a kiss; but, alas, she resists, and, still more singular, "*flashes up in flame into the air;*" inviting him, perhaps in mockery, to follow her, and "catch his vanished purpose." Euphorion shakes off the remnants of the flame, and now, in a wilder humor, mounts on the crags, begins to talk of courage and battle; higher and higher he rises, till the Chorus see him on the topmost cliff, shining "in harness as for victory:" and yet, though at such a distance, they still hear his tones, neither is his figure diminished in their eyes; which indeed, as they observe, always is, and should be, the case with "sacred Poesy," though it mounts heavenward, farther and farther, till it "glitter like the fairest star." But Euphorion's life-dance is near ending. From his high peak, he catches the sound of war, and fires at it, and longs to mix in it, let Chorus and Mother and Father say what they will.

EUPHORION.

And hear ye thunders on the ocean,
And thunders roll from tower and wall;
And host with host, in fierce commotion,
See mixing at the trumpet's call.
And to die in strife
Is the law of life,
That is certain once for all.

HELENA, FAUST, *and* CHORUS.

What a horror! spoken madly!
Wilt thou die? Then what must I?

EUPHORION.

Shall I view it, safe and gladly?
No! to share it will I hie.

HELENA, FAUST, *and* CHORUS.

Fatal are such haughty things;
War is for the stout.

EUPHORION.

Ha! — and a pair of wings
Folds itself out!
Thither! I must! I must!
'T is my hest to fly!

[*He casts himself into the air; his Garments support him for a moment; his head radiates, a Train of Light follows him.*

CHORUS.

Icarus! earth and dust!
Oh, woe! thou mount'st too high.

[*A beautiful Youth rushes down at the feet of the Parents; you fancy you recognize in the dead a well-known form;*[1] *but the bodily part instantly disappears: the gold Crownlet mounts like a comet to the sky; Coat, Mantle and Lyre are left lying.*

HELENA *and* FAUST.

Joy soon changes to woe,
And mirth to heaviest moan.

EUPHORION'S *voice* (*from beneath*).

Let me not to realms below
Descend, O mother, alone!

The prayer is soon granted. The Chorus chant a dirge over the remains, and then: —

HELENA (*to* FAUST).

A sad old saying proves itself again in me,
Good hap with beauty hath no long abode.
So with Love's band is Life's asunder rent:
Lamenting both, I clasp thee in my arms
Once more, and bid thee painfully farewell.
Persephoneia, take my boy, and with him me.

[*She embraces Faust; her Body melts away; Garment and Veil remain in his arms.*

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[1] It is perhaps in reference to this phrase that certain sagacious critics among the Germans have hit upon the wonderful discovery of Euphorion being — Lord Byron! A fact, if it is one, which curiously verifies the author's prediction in this passage. But unhappily, while we fancy we recognize in the dead a well-known form, "the bodily part instantly disappears;" and the keenest critic finds that he can see no deeper into a millstone than another man. Some *allusion* to our English Poet there is, or may be, here and in the page that precedes and the page that follows; but Euphorion is no image of any person; least of all, one would think, of George Lord Byron.

PHORCYAS (*to* FAUST).

Hold fast what now alone remains to thee.
That Garment quit not. They are tugging there,
These Demons at the skirt of it; would fain
To the Nether Kingdoms take it down. Hold fast!
The goddess it is not, whom thou hast lost,
Yet godlike is it. See thou use aright
The priceless high bequest, and soar aloft;
'T will lift thee away above the common world,
Far up to Ether, so thou canst endure.
We meet again, far, very far from hence.
[*Helena's Garments unfold into Clouds, encircle Faust, raise him aloft, and float away with him. Phorcyas picks up Euphorion's Coat, Mantle, and Lyre from the ground, comes forward into the Proscenium, holds these Remains aloft, and says:* —
Well, fairly found be happily won!
'T is true, the Flame is lost and gone:
But well for us we have still this stuff!
A gala-dress to dub our poets of merit,
And make guild-brethren snarl and cuff;
And can't they borrow the Body and Spirit?
At least, I 'll lend them Clothes enough.
[*Sits down in the Proscenium at the foot of a pillar.*

The rest of the personages are now speedily disposed of. Panthalis, the Leader of the Chorus, and the only one of them who has shown any glimmerings of Reason, or of aught beyond mere sensitive life, mere love of Pleasure and fear of Pain, proposes that, being now delivered from the soul-confusing spell of the "Thessalian Hag," they should forthwith return to Hades, to bear Helena company. But none will volunteer with her; so she goes herself. The Chorus have lost their taste for Asphodel Meadows, and playing so subordinate a part in Orcus: they prefer abiding in the Light of Day, though, indeed, under rather peculiar circumstances; being no longer "Persons," they say, but a kind of Occult Qualities, as we conjecture, and Poetic Inspirations, residing in various natural objects. Thus, one division become a sort of invisible

Hamadryads, and have their being in Trees, and their joy in the various movements, beauties and products of Trees. A second change into Echoes; a third, into the Spirits of Brooks; and a fourth take up their abode in Vineyards, and delight in the manufacture of Wine. No sooner have these several parties made up their minds, than the *Curtain falls;* and Phorcyas "*in the Proscenium rises in gigantic size; but steps down from her cothurni, lays her Mask and Veil aside, and shows herself as Mephistopheles, in order, so far as may be necessary, to comment on the piece, by way of Epilogue.*"

Such is *Helena*, the *interlude in Faust.* We have all the desire in the world to hear Mephisto's Epilogue; but far be it from us to take the word out of so gifted a mouth! In the way of commentary on *Helena*, we ourselves have little more to add. The reader sees, in general, that Faust is to save himself from the straits and fetters of Worldly Life in the loftier regions of Art, or in that temper of mind by which alone those regions can be reached, and permanently dwelt in. Farther also, that this doctrine is to be stated emblematically and parabolically; so that it might seem as if, in Goethe's hands, the history of Faust, commencing among the realities of every-day existence, superadding to these certain spiritual agencies, and passing into a more aerial character as it proceeds, may fade away, at its termination, into a phantasmagoric region, where symbol and thing signified are no longer clearly distinguished; and thus the final result be curiously and significantly indicated, rather than directly exhibited. With regard to the special purport of Euphorion, Lynceus and the rest, we have nothing more to say at present; nay perhaps we may have already said too much. For it must not be forgotten by the commentator, and will not, of a surety, be forgotten by Mephistopheles, whenever he may please to deliver his Epilogue, that *Helena* is not an Allegory, but a Phantasmagory; not a type of one thing, but a vague fluctuating fitful adumbration of many. This is no Picture painted on canvas, with mere material colors, and steadfastly abiding our scrutiny; but rather it is like the Smoke of a Wizard's

Caldron, in which, as we gaze on its flickering tints and wild splendors, thousands of strangest shapes unfold themselves, yet no one will abide with us; and thus, as Goethe says elsewhere, "we are reminded of Nothing and of All."

Properly speaking, *Helena* is what the Germans call a *Mährchen* (Fabulous Tale), a species of fiction they have particularly excelled in, and of which Goethe has already produced more than one distinguished specimen. Some day we propose to translate, for our readers, that little piece of his, deserving to be named, as it is, "THE *Mährchen*," and which we must agree with a great critic in reckoning the "Tale of all Tales." As to the composition of this *Helena*, we cannot but perceive it to be deeply studied, appropriate and successful. It is wonderful with what fidelity the Classical style is maintained throughout the earlier part of the Poem; how skilfully it is at once united to the Romantic style of the latter part, and made to reappear, at intervals, to the end. And then the small half-secret touches of sarcasm, the curious little traits by which we get a peep behind the curtain! Figure, for instance, that so transient allusion to these "Bearded Ones sitting watchful there below," and then their tugging at Helena's Mantle to pull it down with them. By such slight hints does Mephistopheles point out our Whereabout; and ever and anon remind us, that not on the firm earth, but on the wide and airy Deep has he spread his strange pavilion, where, in magic light, so many wonders are displayed to us.

Had we chanced to find that Goethe, in other instances, had ever written one line without meaning, or many lines without a deep and true meaning, we should not have thought this little cloud-picture worthy of such minute development, or such careful study. In that case, too, we should never have seen the true *Helena* of Goethe, but some false one of our own too indolent imagination; for this Drama, as it grows clearer, grows also more beautiful and complete; and the third, the fourth perusal of it pleases far better than the first. Few living artists would deserve such faith from us; but few also would so well reward it.

On the general relation of *Helena* to *Faust*, and the degree of fitness of the one for the other, it were premature to speak more expressly at present. We have learned, on authority which we may justly reckon the best, that Goethe is even now engaged in preparing the Second Part of Faust, into which this *Helena* passes as a component part. With the third *Lieferung* of his Works, we understand, the beginning of that Second Part is to be published: we shall then, if need be, feel more qualified to speak.

For the present, therefore, we take leave of *Helena* and *Faust*, and of their Author: but with regard to the latter, our task is nowise ended; indeed, as yet, hardly begun; for it is not in the province of the *Mährchen* that Goethe will ever become most interesting to English readers. But, like his own Euphorion, though he rises aloft into Ether, he derives, Antæus-like, his strength from the Earth. The dullest plodder has not a more practical understanding, or a sounder or more quiet character, than this most aerial and imaginative of poets. We hold Goethe to be the Foreigner, at this era, who, of all others, the best, and the best by many degrees, deserves our study and appreciation. What help we individually can give in such a matter, we shall consider it a duty and a pleasure to have in readiness. We purpose to return, in our next Number, to the consideration of his Works and Character in general.

GOETHE.[1]

[1828.]

It is not on this "Second Portion" of Goethe's Works, which at any rate contains nothing new to us, that we mean at present to dwell. In our last Number, we engaged to make some survey of his writings and character in general; and must now endeavor, with such insight as we have, to fulfil that promise.

We have already said that we reckoned this no unimportant subject; and few of Goethe's readers can need to be reminded that it is no easy one. We hope also that our pretensions in regard to it are not exorbitant; the sum of our aims being nowise to solve so deep and pregnant an inquiry, but only to show that an inquiry of such a sort lies ready for solution; courts the attention of thinking men among us, nay merits a thorough investigation, and must sooner or later obtain it. Goethe's literary history appears to us a matter, beyond most others, of rich, subtle and manifold significance; which will require and reward the best study of the best heads, and to the right exposition of which not one but many judgments will be necessary.

However, we need not linger, preluding on our own inability, and magnifying the difficulties we have so courageously volunteered to front. Considering the highly complex aspect which such a mind of itself presents to us; and, still more, taking into account the state of English opinion in respect of it, there certainly seem few literary questions of our time so perplexed, dubious, perhaps hazardous, as this of the character of Goethe; but few also on which a well-founded, or even a sincere word would be more likely to profit. For our countrymen, at no time indisposed to foreign excellence, but at all times cautious of foreign singularity, have heard much of Goethe; but heard, for the most part, what excited and perplexed rather than instructed them. Vague rumors of the man have, for more than half a century, been humming through our ears: from time to time, we have even seen some distorted, mutilated transcript of his own thoughts, which, all obscure and hieroglyphical as it might often seem, failed not to emit here and there a ray of keenest and purest sense; travellers also are still running to and fro, importing the opinions or, at worst, the gossip of foreign countries: so that, by one means or another, many of us have come to understand, that considerably the most distinguished poet and thinker of his age is called Goethe, and lives at Weimar, and must, to all appearance, be an extremely surprising character: but here, unhappily, our knowledge almost terminates; and still must Curiosity, must ingenuous love of Information and mere passive Wonder alike inquire: What manner of man *is* this? How shall we interpret, how shall we even see him? What is his spiritual structurē, what at least are the outward form and features of his mind? Has he any real poetic worth; how much to his own people, how much to us?

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[1] Foreign Review, No. 3. — *Goethes Sämmtliche Werke. Vollständige Ausgabe letzter Hand.* (Goethe's Collective Works. Complete Edition, with his final Corrections.) — Second Portion, vol. vi.–x. Cotta; Stuttgard and Tübingen, 1827.

Reviewers, of great and of small character, have manfully endeavored to satisfy the British world on these points: but which of us could believe their report? Did it not rather become apparent, as we reflected on the matter, that this Goethe of theirs was not the real man, nay could not be any real man whatever? For what, after all, were their portraits of him but copies, with some retouchings and ornamental appendages, of our grand English original Picture of the German generally? — In itself such a piece of art, as national portraits, under like circumstances, are wont to be; and resembling Goethe, as some unusually expressive Sign of the

Saracen's Head may resemble the present Sultan of Constantinople!

Did we imagine that much information, or any very deep sagacity were required for avoiding such mistakes, it would ill become us to step forward on this occasion. But surely it is given to every man, if he will but take heed, to know so much as whether or not he *knows.* And nothing can be plainer to us than that if, in the present business, we can report *aught* from our own personal vision and clear hearty belief, it will be a useful novelty in the discussion of it. Let the reader be patient with us, then; and according as he finds that we speak honestly and earnestly, or loosely and dishonestly, consider our statement, or dismiss it as unworthy of consideration.

Viewed in his merely external relations, Goethe exhibits an appearance such as seldom occurs in the history of letters, and indeed, from the nature of the case, can seldom occur. A man who, in early life, rising almost at a single bound into the highest reputation over all Europe; by gradual advances, fixing himself more and more firmly in the reverence of his countrymen, ascends silently through many vicissitudes to the supreme intellectual place among them; and now, after half a century, distinguished by convulsions, political, moral and poetical, still reigns, full of years and honors, with a soft undisputed sway; still laboring in his vocation, still forwarding, as with kingly benignity, whatever can profit the culture of his nation: such a man might justly attract our notice, were it only by the singularity of his fortune. Supremacies of this sort are rare in modern times; so universal, and of such continuance, they are almost unexampled. For the age of the Prophets and Theologic Doctors has long since passed away; and now it is by much slighter, by transient and mere earthly ties, that bodies of men connect themselves with a man. The wisest, most melodious voice cannot in these days pass for a divine one; the word Inspiration still lingers, but only in the shape of a poetic figure, from which the once earnest, awful and soul-subduing sense has vanished without return. The polity of Literature is called a Republic; oftener it is an Anarchy, where, by strength or fortune, favorite after favorite rises into splendor and authority, but like Masaniello, while judging the people, is on the ninth day deposed and shot. Nay, few such adventurers can attain even this painful pre-eminence: for at most, it is clear, any given age can have but one first man; many ages have only a crowd of secondary men, each of whom is first in his own eyes: and seldom, at best, can the "Single Person" long keep his station at the head of this wild commonwealth; most sovereigns are never universally acknowledged, least of all in their lifetime; few of the acknowledged can reign peaceably to the end.

Of such a perpetual dictatorship Voltaire among the French gives the last European instance; but even with him it was perhaps a much less striking affair. Voltaire reigned over a sect, less as their lawgiver than as their general; for he was at bitter enmity with the great numerical majority of his nation, by whom his services, far from being acknowledged as benefits, were execrated as abominations. But Goethe's object has, at all times, been rather to unite than to divide; and though he has not scrupled, as occasion served, to speak forth his convictions distinctly enough on many delicate topics, and seems, in general, to have paid little court to the prejudices or private feelings of any man or body of men, we see not at present that his merits are anywhere disputed, his intellectual endeavors controverted, or his person regarded otherwise than with affection and respect. In later years, too, the advanced age of the poet has invested him with another sort of dignity; and the admiration to which his great qualities give him claim is tempered into a milder, grateful feeling, almost as of sons and grandsons to their common father. Dissentients, no doubt, there are and must be; but, apparently, their cause is not pleaded in words: no man of the smallest note speaks on that side; or at most, such men may question, not the worth of Goethe, but the cant and idle affectation with which, in many quarters, this must be promulgated and bepraised. Certainly there is not, probably there never was, in any European country, a writer who, with so cunning a style, and so deep, so abstruse a sense, ever found so many readers. For, from the peasant to the king, from the callow dilettante and innamorato, to the grave transcendental philosopher, men of all degrees and dispositions are familiar with the writings of Goethe: each studies them with affection, with a faith which, "where it cannot unriddle, learns to trust;" each takes with him what he is adequate to carry, and departs thankful for his own allotment. Two of Goethe's intensest admirers are Schelling of Munich, and a worthy friend of ours in Berlin; one of these among the deepest men in Europe, the other among the shallowest.

All this is, no doubt, singular enough; and a proper understanding of it would throw light on many things. Whatever we may think of Goethe's ascendency, the existence of it remains a highly curious fact; and to trace its history, to discover by what steps such influence has been attained, and how so long preserved, were no trivial or unprofitable inquiry. It would be worth while to see so strange a man for his own sake; and here we should see, not only the man himself, and his own progress and spiritual development, but the progress also of his nation: and this at no sluggish or even quiet era, but in times marked by strange revolutions of opinions, by angry controversies, high enthusiasm, novelty of enterprise, and doubtless, in many respects, by rapid advancement: for that the Germans have been, and still are, restlessly struggling forward, with honest unwearied effort, sometimes with enviable success, no one, who knows them, will deny; and as little, that in every province of Literature, of Art and humane accomplishment, the influence, often the direct guidance of Goethe may be recognized. The history of his mind is, in fact, at the same time, the history of German culture in his day: for whatever excellence this individual might realize has sooner or later been acknowledged and appropriated by his country; and the title of *Musagetes*, which his admirers give him, is perhaps, in sober strictness, not unmerited. Be it for good or for evil, there is certainly no German, since the days of Luther, whose life can occupy so large a space in the intellectual history of that people.

In this point of view, were it in no other, Goethe's *Dichtung* *und Wahrheit*, so soon as it is completed, may deserve to be reckoned one of his most interesting works. We speak not of its literary merits, though in that respect, too, we must say that few Autobiographies have come in our way, where so difficult a matter was so successfully handled; where perfect knowledge could be found united so kindly with perfect tolerance ; and a personal narrative, moving along in soft clearness, showed us a man, and the objects that environed him, under an aspect so verisimilar, yet so lovely, with an air dignified and earnest, yet graceful, cheerful, even gay: a story as of a Patriarch to his children ; such, indeed, as few men can be called upon to relate, and few, if called upon, could relate so well. What would we give for such an Autobiography of Shakspeare, of Milton, even of Pope or Swift!

The *Dichtung und Wahrheit* has been censured considerably in England; but not, we are inclined to believe, with any insight into its proper meaning. The misfortune of the work among us was, that we did not know the narrator *before* his narrative; and could not judge what sort of narrative he was bound to give, in these circumstances, or whether he was bound to give any at all. We saw nothing of his situation; heard only the sound of his voice ; and hearing it, never doubted but he must be perorating in official garments from the rostrum, instead of speaking trustfully by the fireside. For the chief ground of offence seemed to be, that the story was not noble enough; that it entered on details of too poor and private a nature; verged here and there towards garrulity; was not, in one word, written in the style of what we call a *gentleman.* Whether it might be written in the style of a *man*, and how far these two styles might be compatible, and what might be their relative worth and preferableness, was a deeper question; to which apparently no heed had been given. Yet herein lay the very cream of the matter; for Goethe was not writing to "persons of quality" in England, but to persons of heart and head in Europe: a somewhat different problem perhaps, and requiring a somewhat different solution. As to this ignobleness and freedom of detail, especially, we may say, that, to a German, few accusations could appear more surprising than this, which, with us, constitutes the head and front of his offending. Goethe, in his own country, far from being accused of undue familiarity towards his readers, had, up to that date, been laboring under precisely the opposite charge. It was his stateliness, his reserve, his indifference, his contempt for the public, that were censured. Strange, almost inexplicable, as many of his works might appear; loud, sorrowful, and altogether stolid as might be the criticisms they underwent, no word of explanation could be wrung from him; he had never even deigned to write a preface. And in later and juster days, when the study of Poetry came to be prosecuted in another spirit, and it was found that Goethe was standing, not like a culprit to plead for himself before the literary *plebeians,* but like a high teacher and preacher, speaking for truth, to whom both *plebeians* and *patricians* were bound to give all ear, the outward difficulty of interpreting his works began indeed to vanish; but enough still remained, nay increased curiosity had given rise to new dfficulties and deeper inquiries. Not only *what* were these works, but *how* did they originate, became questions for the critic. Yet several of Goethe's chief productions, and of his smaller poems nearly the whole, seemed so intimately interwoven with his private history, that, without some knowledge of this, no answer to such questions could be given. Nay commentaries have been written on single pieces of his, endeavoring, by way of guess, to supply this deficiency.[1] We can thus judge whether, to the Germans, such minuteness of exposition in *Dichtùng und Wahrheit* may have seemed a sin. Few readers of Goethe, we believe, but would wish rather to see it extended than curtailed.

It is our duty also to remark, if any one be still unaware of it, that the *Memoirs of Goethe,* published some years ago in London, can have no real concern with this Autobiography. The rage of hunger is an excuse for much; otherwise that German Translator, whom indignant Reviewers have proved to know *no* German, were a highly reprehensible man. His work, it appears, is done from the French, and shows subtractions, and what is worse, additions. But the unhappy Dragoman has already been chastised, perhaps too sharply. If, warring with the reefs and breakers and cross eddies of Life, he still hover on this side the shadow of Night, and any word of ours might reach him, we would rather say: Courage, Brother! grow honest, and times will mend!

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[1] See, in particular, Dr. Kannegiesser *Über Goethes Harzsreise im Winter* 1820.

It would appear, then, that for inquiries into Foreign Literature, for all men anxious to see and understand the European world as it lies around them, a great problem is presented in this Goethe; a singular, highly significant phenomenon, and now also means more or less complete for ascertaining its significance. A man of wonderful, nay unexampled reputation and intellectual influence among forty millions of reflective, serious and cultivated men, invites us to study him; and to determine for ourselves, whether and how far such influence has been salutary, such reputation merited. That this call will one day be answered, that Goethe will be seen and judged of in his real character among us, appears certain enough. His name, long familiar everywhere, has now awakened the attention of critics in all European countries to his works: he is studied wherever true study exists: eagerly studied even in France; nay, some considerable knowledge of his nature and spiritual importance seems already to prevail there.[1]

For ourselves, meanwhile, in giving all due weight to so curious an exhibition of opinion, it is doubtless our part, at the same time, to beware that we do not give it too much. This universal sentiment of admiration is wonderful, is interesting enough; but it must not lead us astray. We English stand as yet without the sphere of it; neither will we plunge blindly in, but enter considerately, or, if we see good, keep aloof from it altogether. Fame, we may understand, is no sure test of merit, but only a probability of such: it is an accident, not a property, of a man; like light, it can give little or nothing, but at most may show what is given; often it is but a false glare, dazzling the eyes of the vulgar, lending by casual extrinsic splendor the brightness and manifold glance of the diamond to pebbles of no value. A man is in all cases simply *the* man, of the same intrinsic worth and weakness, whether his worth and weakness lie hidden in the depths of his own consciousness, or be betrumpeted and beshouted from end to end of the habitable globe. These are plain truths, which no one should lose sight of; though, whether in love or in anger, for praise or for condemnation, most of us are too apt to forget them. But least of all can it become the critic to "follow a multitude to do evil," even when that evil is excess of admiration: on the contrary, it will behoove him to lift up his voice, how feeble soever, how unheeded soever, against the common delusion; from which, if he can save, or help to save, any mortal, his endeavors will have been repaid.

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[1] Witness *Le Tasse, Drame par Duval*, and the Criticisms on it. See also the Essays in the *Globe*, Nos. 55, 64 (1826).

With these things in some measure before us, we must remind our readers of another influence at work in this affair, and one acting, as we think, in the contrary direction. That pitiful enough desire for "originality," which lurks and acts in all minds, will rather, we imagine, lead the critic of Foreign Literature to adopt the negative than the affirmative with regard to Goethe. If a writer indeed feel that he is writing for England alone, invisibly and inaudibly to the rest of the Earth, the temptations may be pretty equally balanced; if he write for some small conclave, which he mistakenly thinks the representative of England, they may sway this way or that, as it chances. But writing in such isolated spirit is no longer possible. Traffic, with its swift ships, is uniting all nations into one; Europe at large is becoming more and more one public; and in this public, the voices for Goethe, compared with those against him, are in the proportion, as we reckon them, both as to the number and value, of perhaps a hundred to one. We take in, not Germany alone, but France and Italy; not the Schlegels and Schellings, but the Manzonis and De Staëls. The bias of originality, therefore, may lie to the side of censure; and whoever among us shall step forward, with such knowledge as our common critics have of

Goethe, to enlighten the European public, by contradiction in this matter, displays a heroism, which, in estimating his other merits, ought nowise to be forgotten.

Our own view of the case coincides, we confess, in some degree with that of the majority. We reckon that Goethe's fame has, to a considerable extent, been deserved; that his influence has been of high benefit to his own country; nay more, that it promises to be of benefit to us, and to all other nations. The essential grounds of this opinion, which to explain minutely were a long, indeed boundless task, we may state without many words. We find, then, in Goethe, an Artist, in the high and ancient meaning of that term; in the meaning which it may have borne long ago among the masters of Italian painting, and the fathers of Poetry in England; we say that we trace in the creations of this man, belonging in every sense to our own time, some touches of that old, divine spirit, which had long passed away from among us, nay which, as has often been laboriously demonstrated, was not to return to this world any more.

Or perhaps we come nearer our meaning, if we say that in Goethe we discover by far the most striking instance, in our time, of a writer who is, in strict speech, what Philosophy can call a Man. He is neither noble nor plebeian, neither liberal nor servile, nor infidel nor devotee; but the best excellence of *all* these, joined in pure union; "a clear and universal *Man.*" Goethe's poetry is no separate faculty, no mental handicraft; but the voice of the whole harmonious manhood: nay it is the very harmony, the living and life-giving harmony of that rich manhood which forms his poetry. All good men may be called poets in act, or in word; all good poets are so in both. But Goethe besides appears to us as a person of that deep endowment, and gifted vision, of that experience also and sympathy in the ways of all men, which qualify him to stand forth, not only as the literary ornament, but in many respects too as the Teacher and exemplar of his age. For, to say nothing of his natural gifts, he has cultivated himself and his art, he has studied how to live and to write, with a fidelity, an unwearied earnestness, of which there is no other living instance; of which, among British poets especially, Wordsworth alone offers any resemblance. And this in our view is the result: To our minds, in these soft, melodious imaginations of his, there is embodied the Wisdom which is proper to this time; the beautiful, the religious Wisdom, which may still, with something of its old impressiveness, speak to the whole soul; still, in these hard, unbelieving utilitarian days, reveal to us glimpses of the Unseen but not unreal World, that so the Actual and the Ideal may again meet together, and clear Knowledge be again wedded to Religion, in the life and business of men.

Such is our conviction or persuasion with regard to the poetry of Goethe. Could we demonstrate this opinion to be true, could we even exhibit it with that degree of clearness and consistency which it has attained in our own thoughts, Goethe were, on our part, sufficiently recommended to the best attention of all thinking men. But, unhappily, it is not a subject susceptible of demonstration: the merits and characteristics of a Poet are not to be set forth by logic; but to be gathered by personal, and as in this case it must be, by deep and careful inspection of his works. Nay Goethe's world is every way so different from ours; it costs us such effort, we have so much to remember, and so much to forget, before we can transfer ourselves in any measure into his peculiar point of vision, that a right study of him, for an Englishman, even of ingenuous, open, inquisitive mind, becomes unusually difficult; for a fixed, decided, contemptuous Englishman, next to impossible. To a reader of the first class, helps may be given, explanations will remove many a difficulty; beauties that lay hidden may be made apparent; and directions, adapted to his actual position, will at length guide him into the proper track for such an inquiry. All this, however, must be a work of progression and detail. To do our part in it, from time to time, must rank among the best duties of an English Foreign Review. Meanwhile, our present endeavor limits itself within far narrower bounds. We cannot aim to make Goethe known, but only to prove that he is worthy of being known; at most, to point out, as it were afar off, the path by which some knowledge of him may be obtained. A slight glance at his general literary character and procedure, and one or two of his chief productions which throw light on these, must for the present suffice.

A French diplomatic personage, contemplating Goethe's physiognomy, is said to have observed: *Voilà un homme qui a eu beaucoup de chagrins.* A truer version of the matter, Goethe himself seems to think, would have been: Here is a man who has struggled toughly; who has *es sich recht sauer werden lassen.* Goethe's life, whether as a writer and thinker, or as a living active man, has indeed been a life of effort, of earnest toilsome endeavor after all excellence. Accordingly, his intellectual progress, his spiritual and moral history, as it may be gathered from his successive Works, furnishes, with us, no small portion of the pleasure and profit we derive from perusing them. Participating deeply in all the influences of his age, he has from the first, at every new epoch, stood forth to elucidate the new circumstances of the time; to offer the instruction, the solace, which that time required. His literary life divides itself into two portions widely different in character: the products of the first, once so new and original, have long, either directly or through the thousand thousand imitations of them, been familiar to us; with the products of the second, equally original, and in our day far more precious, we are yet little acquainted. These two classes of work stand curiously related with each other; at first view, in strong contradiction, yet, in truth, connected together by the strictest sequence. For Goethe has not only suffered and mourned in bitter agony under the spiritual perplexities of his time; but he has also mastered these, he is above them, and has shown others how to rise above them. At one time, we found him in darkness, and now he is in light; he was once an Unbeliever, and now he is a Believer; and he believes, moreover, not by denying his unbelief, but by following it out; not by stopping short, still less turning back, in his inquiries, but by resolutely prosecuting them. This, it appears to us, is a case of singular interest, and rarely exemplified, if at all, elsewhere.

in these our days. How has this man, to whom the world once offered nothing but blackness, denial and despair, attained to that better vision which now shows it to him not tolerable only, but full of solemnity and loveliness? How has the belief of a Saint been united in this high and true mind with the clearness of a Sceptic; the devout spirit of a Fénelon made to blend in soft harmony with the gayety, the sarcasm, the shrewdness of a Voltaire?

Goethe's two earliest works are *Götz von Berlichingen* and the *Sorrows of Werter.* The boundless influence and popularity they gained, both at home and abroad, is well known. It was they that established almost at once his literary fame in his own country; and even determined his subsequent private history, for they brought him into contact with the Duke of Weimar; in connection with whom, the Poet, engaged in manifold duties, political as well as literary, has lived for fifty-four years, and still, in honorable retirement, continues to live.[1] Their effects over Europe at large were not less striking than in Germany.

"It would be difficult," observes a writer on this subject, "to name two books which have exercised a deeper influence on the subsequent literature of Europe, than these two performances of a young author; his first-fruits, the produce of his twenty-fourth year. *Werter* appeared to seize the hearts of men in all quarters of the world, and to utter for them the word which they had long been waiting to hear. As usually happens, too, this same word, once uttered, was soon abundantly repeated; spoken in all dialects, and chanted through all notes of the gamut, till the sound of it had grown a weariness rather than a pleasure. Sceptical sentimentality, view-hunting, love, friendship, suicide, and desperation, became the staple of literary ware; and though the epidemic, after a long course of years, subsided in Germany, it reappeared with various modifications in other countries, and everywhere abundant traces of its good and bad effects are still to be discerned. The fortune of *Berlichingen with the Iron Hand*, though less sudden, was by no means less exalted. In his own country, *Götz*, though he now stands solitary and childless, became the parent of an innumerable progeny of chivalry plays, feudal delineations, and poetico-antiquarian performances; which, though long ago deceased, made noise enough in their day and generation: and with ourselves, his influence has been perhaps still more remarkable. Sir Walter Scott's first literary enterprise was a translation of *Götz von Berlichingen;* and if genius could be communicated like instruction, we might call this work of Goethe's the prime cause of *Marmion* and the *Lady of the Lake*, with all that has followed from the same creative hand. Truly, a grain of seed that has lighted on the right soil! For if not firmer and fairer, it has grown to be taller and broader than any other tree; and all the nations of the earth are still yearly gathering of its fruit.

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[1] Since the above was written, that worthy Prince — worthy, we have understood, in all respects, exemplary in whatever concerned Literature and the Arts — has been called suddenly away. He died on his road from Berlin, near Torgau, on the 24th of June.

"But, overlooking these spiritual genealogies, which bring little certainty and little profit, it may be sufficient to observe of *Berlichingen* and *Werter*, that they stand prominent among the causes, or, at the very least, among the signals of a great change in modern literature. The former directed men's attention with a new force to the picturesque effects of the Past; and the latter, for the first time, attempted the more accurate delineation of a class of feelings deeply important to modern minds, but for which our elder poetry offered no exponent, and perhaps could offer none, because they are feelings that arise from Passion incapable of being converted into Action, and belong chiefly to an age as indolent, cultivated and unbelieving as our own. This, notwithstanding the dash of falsehood which may exist in *Werter* itself, and the boundless delirium of extravagance which it called forth in others, is a high praise which cannot justly be denied it. The English reader ought also to understand that our current version of *Werter* is mutilated and inaccurate: it comes to us through the all-subduing medium of the French, shorn of its caustic strength, with its melancholy rendered maudlin, its hero reduced from the stately gloom of a broken-hearted poet to the tearful wrangling of a dyspeptic tailor."

To the same dark wayward mood, which, in *Werter*, pours itself forth in bitter wailings over human life; and, in *Berlichingen*, appears as a fond and sad looking back into the Past, belong various other productions of Goethe's; for example, the *Mitschuldigen*, and the first idea of *Faust*, which, however, was not realized in actual composition till a calmer period of his history. Of this early harsh and crude yet fervid and genial period, *Werter* may stand here as the representative; and, viewed in its external and internal relation, will help to illustrate both the writer and the public he was writing for.

At the present day, it would be difficult for us, satisfied, nay sated to nausea, as we have been with the doctrines of Sentimentality, to estimate the boundless interest which *Werter* must have excited when first given to the world. It was then new in all senses; it was wonderful, yet wished for, both in its own country and in every other. The Literature of Germany had as yet but partially awakened from its long torpor: deep learning, deep reflection, have at no time been wanting there; but the creative spirit had for above a century been almost extinct. Of late, however, the Ramlers, Rabeners, Gellerts, had attained to no inconsiderable polish of style; Klopstock's *Messias* had called forth the admiration, and perhaps still more the pride, of the country, as a piece of art; a high enthusiasm was abroad; Lessing had roused the minds of men to a deeper and truer interest in Literature, had even decidedly begun to introduce a heartier, warmer and more expressive style. The Germans were on the alert; in expectation, or at least in full readiness for some far bolder impulse; waiting for the Poet that might speak to them from the heart to the heart. It was in Goethe that such a Poet was to be given them.

Nay the Literature of other countries, placid, self-satisfied as they might seem, was in an equally expectant condition. Everywhere, as in Germany, there was polish and languor, external glitter and internal vacuity; it was not fire, but a picture of fire, at which no soul could be warmed. Literature had sunk from its former vocation: it no longer held the mirror up to Nature; no longer reflected, in many-colored expressive symbols, the actual passions, the hopes, sorrows, joys of living men; but dwelt in a remote conventional world, in *Castles of Otranto*, in *Epigoniads* and *Leonidases*, among clear, metallic heroes, and white, high, stainless beauties, in whom the drapery and elocution were nowise the least important qualities. Men thought it right that the heart should swell into magnanimity with Caractacus and Cato, and melt into sorrow with many an Eliza and Adelaide; but the heart was in no haste either to swell or to melt. Some pulses of heroical sentiment, a few *un*natural tears might, with conscientious readers, be actually squeezed forth on such occasions: but they came only from the surface of the mind; nay had the conscientious man considered of the matter, he would have found that they ought not to have come at all. Our only English poet of the period was Goldsmith; a pure, clear, genuine spirit, had he been of depth or strength sufficient: his *Vicar of Wakefield* remains the best of all modern Idyls; but it is and was nothing more. And consider our leading writers; consider the poetry of Gray, and the prose of Johnson. The first a laborious mosaic, through the hard stiff lineaments of which little life or true grace could be expected to look: real feeling, and all freedom of expressing it, are sacrificed to pomp, to cold splendor; for vigor we have a certain mouthing vehemence, too elegant indeed to be tumid, yet essentially foreign to the heart, and seen to extend no deeper than the mere voice and gestures. Were it not for his *Letters*, which are full of warm exuberant power, we might almost doubt whether Gray was a man of genius; nay was a living man at all, and not rather some thousand-times more cunningly devised poetical turning-loom, than that of Swift's Philosophers in Laputa. Johnson's prose is true, indeed, and sound, and full of practical sense: few men have seen more clearly into the motives, the interests, the whole walk and conversation of the living busy world as it lay before him; but farther than this busy, and, to most of us, rather prosaic world, he seldom looked: his instruction is for men of business, and in regard to matters of business alone. Prudence is the highest Virtue he can inculcate; and for that finer portion of our nature, that portion of it which belongs essentially to Literature strictly so called, where our highest feelings, our best joys and keenest sorrows, our Doubt, our Love, our Religion reside, he has no word to utter; no remedy, no counsel to give us in our straits; or at most, if, like poor Boswell, the patient is importunate, will answer: "My dear Sir, endeavor to clear your mind of Cant."

The turn which Philosophical speculation had taken in the preceding age corresponded with this tendency, and enhanced its narcotic influences; or was, indeed, properly speaking, the root they had sprung from. Locke, himself a clear, humble-minded, patient, reverent, nay religious man, had paved the way for banishing religion from the world. Mind, by being modelled in men's imaginations into a Shape, a Visibility; and reasoned of as if it had been some composite, divisible and reunitable substance, some finer chemical salt, or curious piece of logical joinery, — began to lose its immaterial, mysterious, divine though invisible character: it was tacitly figured as something that might, were our organs fine enough, be *seen*. Yet who had ever seen it? Who could ever see it? Thus by degrees it passed into a Doubt, a Relation, some faint Possibility; and at last into a highly probable Nonentity. Following Locke's footsteps, the French had discovered that "as the stomach secretes Chyle, so does the brain secrete Thought." And what then was Religion, what was Poetry, what was all high and heroic feeling? Chiefly a delusion; often a false and pernicious one. Poetry, indeed, was still to be preserved; because Poetry was a useful thing: men needed amusement, and loved to amuse themselves with Poetry: the playhouse was a pretty lounge of an evening; then there were so many precepts, satirical, didactic, so much more impressive for the rhyme; to say nothing of your occasional verses, birthday odes, epithalamiums, epicediums, by which "the dream of existence may be so considerably sweetened and embellished." Nay does not Poetry, acting on the imaginations of men, excite them to daring purposes; sometimes, as in the case of Tyrtæus, to fight better; in which wise may it not rank as a useful stimulant to man, along with Opium and Scotch Whiskey, the manufacture of which is allowed by law? In Heaven's name, then, let Poetry be preserved.

With Religion, however, it fared somewhat worse. In the eyes of Voltaire and his disciples, Religion was a superfluity, indeed a nuisance. Here, it is true, his followers have since found that he went too far; that Religion, being a great sanction to civil morality, is of use for keeping society in order, at least the lower classes, who have not the feeling of Honor in due force; and therefore, as a considerable help to the Constable and Hangman, *ought* decidedly to be kept up. But such toleration is the fruit only of later days. In those times, there was no question but how to get rid of it, root and branch, the sooner the better. A gleam of zeal, nay we will call it, however basely alloyed, a glow of real enthusiasm and love of truth, may have animated the minds of these men, as they looked abroad on the pestilent jungle of Superstition, and hoped to clear the earth of it forever. This little glow, so alloyed, so contaminated with pride and other poor or bad admixtures, was the last which thinking men were to experience in Europe for a time. So is it always in regard to Religious Belief, how degraded and defaced soever: the delight of the Destroyer and Denier is no pure delight, and must soon pass away. With bold, with skilful hand, Voltaire set his torch to the jungle: it blazed aloft to heaven; and the flame exhilarated and comforted the incendiaries; but unhappily, such comfort could not continue. Ere long this flame, with its cheerful light and heat, was gone: the jungle, it is true, had been consumed: but, with its entanglements, its shelter and its spots of verdure also; and the black, chill, ashy swamp, left in its stead, seemed for a time a greater evil than the other.

In such a state of painful obstruction, extending itself everywhere over Europe, and already master of Germany, lay the general mind, when Goethe first appeared in Literature. Whatever belonged to the finer nature of man had withered under the Harmattan breath of Doubt, or passed away in the conflagration of open Infidelity; and now, where the Tree of Life once bloomed and brought fruit of goodliest savor, there was only barrenness and desolation. To such as could find sufficient interest in the day-labor and day-wages of earthly existence; in the resources of the five bodily Senses, and of Vanity, the only mental sense which yet flourished, which flourished indeed with gigantic vigor, matters were still not so bad. Such men helped themselves forward, as they will generally do; and found the world, if not an altogether proper sphere (for every man, disguise it as he may, has a *soul* in him), at least a tolerable enough place; where, by one item and another, some comfort, or show of comfort, might from time to time be got up, and these few years, especially since they were so few, be spent without much murmuring. But to men afflicted with the "malady of Thought," some devoutness of temper was an inevitable heritage: to such the noisy forum of the world could appear but an empty, altogether insufficient concern; and the whole scene of life had become hopeless enough. Unhappily, such feelings are yet by no means so infrequent with ourselves, that we need stop here to depict them. That state of Unbelief from which the Germans do seem to be in some measure delivered, still presses with incubus force on the greater part of Europe; and nation after nation, each in its own way, feels that the first of all moral problems is how to cast it off, or how to rise above it. Governments naturally attempt the first expedient; Philosophers, in general, the second.

The poet, says Schiller, is a citizen not only of his country, but of his time. Whatever occupies and interests men in general, will interest him still more. That nameless Unrest, the blind struggle of a soul in bondage, that high, sad, longing Discontent, which was agitating every bosom, had driven Goethe almost to despair. All felt it; he alone could give it voice. And here lies the secret of his popularity; in his deep, susceptive heart, he felt a thousand times more keenly what every one was feeling; with the creative gift which belonged to him as a poet, he bodied it forth into visible shape, gave it a local habitation and a name; and so made himself the spokesman of his generation. *Werter* is but the cry of that dim, rooted pain, under which all thoughtful men of a certain age were languishing: it paints the misery, it passionately utters the complaint; and heart and voice, all over Europe, loudly and at once respond to it. True, it prescribes no remedy; for that was a far different, far harder enterprise, to which other years and a higher culture were required; but even this utterance of the pain, even this little, for the present, is ardently grasped at, and with eager sympathy appropriated in every bosom. If Byron's life-weariness, his moody melancholy, and mad stormful indignation, borne on the tones of a wild and quite artless melody, could pierce so deep into many a British heart, now that the whole matter is no longer new, — is indeed old and trite, — we may judge with what vehement acceptance this *Werter* must have been welcomed, coming as it did like a voice from unknown regions; the first thrilling peal of that impassioned dirge, which, in country after country, men's ears have listened to, till they were deaf to all else. For *Werter*, infusing itself into the core and whole spirit of Literature, gave birth to a race of Sentimentalists, who have raged and wailed in every part of the world; till better light dawned on them, or at worst, exhausted Nature laid herself to sleep, and it was discovered that lamenting was an unproductive labor. These funereal choristers, in Germany a loud, haggard, tumultuous, as well as tearful class, were named the *Kraftmänner*, or Power-men; but have all long since, like sick children, cried themselves to rest.

Byron was our English Sentimentalist and Power-man; the strongest of his kind in Europe; the wildest, the gloomiest, and it may be hoped the last. For what good is it to "whine, put finger i' the eye, and sob," in such a case? Still more, to snarl and snap in malignant wise, "like dog distract, or monkey sick"? Why should we quarrel with our existence, here as it lies before us, our field and inheritance, to make or to mar, for better or for worse; in which, too, so many noblest men have, ever from the beginning, warring with the very evils we war with, both made and been what will be venerated to all time?

"What shapest thou here at the World? 'T is shapen long ago;
The Maker shaped it, *he* thought it best even *so.*
Thy lot is appointed, go follow its hest;
Thy journey 's begun, thou must move and not rest;
For sorrow and care cannot alter thy case,
And running, not raging, will win thee the race."

Meanwhile, of the philosophy which reigns in *Werter*, and which it has been our lot to hear so often repeated elsewhere, we may here produce a short specimen. The following passage will serve our turn; and be, if we mistake not, new to the mere English reader: —

"That the life of man is but a dream, has come into many a head; and with me, too, some feeling of that sort is ever at work. When I look upon the limits within which man's powers of action and inquiry are hemmed in; when I see how all effort issues simply in procuring supply for wants, which again have no object but continuing this poor existence of ours; and then, that all satisfaction on certain points of inquiry is but a dreaming resignation, while you paint, with many-colored figures and gay prospects, the walls you sit imprisoned by, — all this, Wilhelm, makes me dumb. I return to my own heart, and find there such a world! Yet a world, too, more in forecast and dim desire, than in vision and living power. And then all swims before my mind's eye; and so I smile, and again go dreaming on as others do.

"That children know not what they want, all conscientious tutors and education-philosophers have long been agreed: but that full-grown men, as well as children, stagger to and fro along this earth; like these, not knowing whence they come or whither they go; aiming, just as little, after true objects; governed just as well by biscuit, cakes and birch-rods: this is what no one likes to believe; and yet it seems to me, the fact is lying under our very nose.

"I will confess to thee, for I know what thou wouldst say to me on this point, that those are the happiest, who, like children, live from one day to the other, carrying their dolls about with them, to dress and undress; gliding also, with the highest respect, before the drawer where mamma has locked the gingerbread; and, when they do get the wished-for morsel, devouring it with puffed-out cheeks, and crying, More! — these are the fortunate of the earth. Well is it likewise with those who can label their rag-gathering employments, or perhaps their passions, with pompous titles, and represent them to mankind as gigantic undertakings for its welfare and salvation. Happy the man who can live in such wise! But he who, in his humility, observes where all this issues, who sees how featly any small thriving citizen can trim his patch of garden into a Paradise, and with what unbroken heart even the unhappy crawls along under his burden, and all are alike ardent to see the light of this sun but one minute longer; — yes, he is silent, and he too forms his world out of himself, and he too is happy because he is a man. And then, hemmed in as he is, he ever keeps in his heart the sweet feeling of freedom, and that this dungeon — can be left when he likes."[1]

What Goethe's own temper and habit of thought must have been, while the materials of such a work were forming themselves within his heart, might be in some degree conjectured, and he has himself informed us. We quote the following passage from his *Dichtung und Wahrheit.* The writing of *Werter,* it would seem, indicating so gloomy, almost desperate a state of mind in the author, was at the same time a symptom, indeed a cause, of his now having got delivered from such melancholy. Far from recommending suicide to others, as *Werter* has often been accused of doing, it was the first proof that Goethe himself had abandoned these "hypochondriacal crotchets:" the imaginary "Sorrows" had helped to free him from many real ones.

"Such weariness of life," he says, "has its physical and its spiritual causes; those we shall leave to the Doctor, these to the Moralist, for investigation; and in this so trite matter, touch only on the main point, where that phenomenon expresses itself most distinctly. All pleasure in life is founded on the regular return of external things. The alternations of day and night, of the seasons, of the blossoms and fruits, and whatever else meets us from epoch to epoch with the offer and command of enjoyment, — these are the essential springs of earthly existence. The more open we are to such enjoyments, the happier we feel ourselves; but, should the vicissitude of these appearances come and go without our taking interest in it; should such benignant invitations address themselves to us in vain, then follows the greatest misery, the heaviest malady; one grows to view life as a sickening burden. We have heard of the Englishman who hanged himself, to be no more troubled with daily putting off and on his clothes. I knew an honest gardener, the overseer of some extensive pleasure-grounds, who once splenetically exclaimed: shall I see these clouds forever passing, then, from east to west? It is told of one of our most distinguished men,[1] that he viewed with dissatisfaction the spring again growing green, and wished that, by way of change, it would for once be red. These are specially the symptoms of life-weariness, which not seldom issues in suicide, and, at this time, among men of meditative, secluded character, was more frequent than might be supposed.

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[1] *Leiden des jungen Werther. Am 22 May.*

"Nothing, however, will sooner induce this feeling of satiety than the return of love. The first love, it is said justly, is the only one; for in the second, and by the second, the highest significance of love is in fact lost. That idea of infinitude, of everlasting endurance, which supports and bears it aloft, is destroyed: it seems transient, like all that returns. . . .

"Farther, a young man soon comes to find, if not in himself, at least in others, that moral epochs have their course, as well as the seasons. The favor of the great, the protection of the powerful, the help of the active, the good-will of the many, the love of the few, all fluctuates up and down; so that we cannot hold it fast, any more than we can hold sun, moon and stars. And yet these things are not mere natural events: such blessings flee away from us, by our own blame or that of others, by accident or destiny; but they do flee away, they fluctuate, and we are never sure of them.

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[1] Lessing, we believe: but perhaps it was less the greenness of spring that vexed him than Jacobi's too lyrical admiration of it. — Ed.

"But what most pains the young man of sensibility is, the incessant return of our faults: for how long is it before we learn, that, in cultivating our virtues, we nourish our faults along with them! The former rest on the latter, as on their roots; and these ramify themselves in secret as strongly and as wide, as those others in the open light. Now, as we for most part practise our virtues with forethought and will, but by our faults are overtaken unexpectedly, the former seldom give us much joy, the latter are continually giving us sorrow and distress. Indeed, here lies the subtlest difficulty in Self-knowledge, the difficulty which almost renders it impossible. But figure, in addition to all this, the heat of youthful blood, an imagination easily fascinated and paralyzed by individual objects; farther, the wavering commotions of the day; and you will find that an impatient striving to free one's self from such a pressure was no unnatural state.

"However, these gloomy contemplations, which, if a man yield to them, will lead him to boundless lengths, could not have so decidedly developed themselves in our young German minds, had not some outward cause excited and forwarded us in this sorrowful employment. Such a cause existed for us in the Literature, especially the Poetical Literature, of England, the great qualities of which are accompanied by a certain earnest melancholy, which it imparts to every one that occupies himself with it.

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"In such an element, with such an environment of circumstances, with studies and tastes of this sort; harassed by unsatisfied desires, externally nowhere called forth to important action; with the sole prospect of dragging on a languid, spiritless, mere civic life, — we had recurred, in our disconsolate pride, to the thought that life, when it no longer suited one, might be cast aside at pleasure; and had helped ourselves hereby, stintedly enough, over the crosses and tediums of the time. These sentiments were so universal, that *Werter*, on this very account, could produce the greatest effect; striking in everywhere with the dominant humor, and representing the interior of a sickly youthful heart, in a visible and palpable shape. How accurately the English have known this sorrow, might be seen from these few significant lines, written before the appearance of *Werter:* —

'To griefs congenial prone,
More wounds than nature gave he knew,
While misery's form his fancy drew
In dark ideal hues, and horrors not its own.'[1]

"Self-murder is an occurrence in men's affairs which, how much soever it may have already been discussed and commented upon, excites an interest in every mortal; and, at every new era, must be discussed again. Montesquieu confers on his heroes and great men the right of putting themselves to death when they see good; observing, that it must stand at the will of every one to conclude the Fifth Act of his Tragedy whenever he thinks best. Here, however, our business lies not with persons who, in activity, have led an important life, who have spent their days for some mighty empire, or for the cause of freedom; and whom one may forbear to censure, when, seeing the high ideal purpose which had inspired them vanish from the earth, they meditate pursuing it to that other undiscovered country. Our business here is with persons to whom, properly from want of activity, and in the peacefulest condition imaginable, life has nevertheless, by their exorbitant requisitions on themselves, become a burden. As I myself was in this predicament, and know best what pain I suffered in it, what efforts it cost me to escape from it, I shall not hide the speculations I, from time to time, considerately prosecuted, as to the various modes of death one had to choose from.

"It is something so unnatural for a man to break loose from himself, not only to hurt, but to annihilate himself, that he for the most part catches at means of a mechanical sort for putting his purpose in execution. When Ajax falls on his sword, it is the weight of his body that performs this service for him. When the warrior adjures his armor-bearer to slay him, rather than that he come into the hands of the enemy, this is likewise an external force which he secures for himself; only a moral instead of a physical one. Women seek in the water a cooling for their desperation; and the highly mechanical means of pistol-shooting insures a quick act with the smallest effort. Hanging is a death one mentions unwillingly, because it is an ignoble one. In England it may happen more readily than elsewhere, because from youth upwards you there see that punishment frequent without being specially ignominious. By poison, by opening of veins, men aim but at parting slowly from life; and the most refined, the speediest, the most painless death, by means of an asp, was worthy of a Queen, who had spent her life in pomp and luxurious pleasure. All these, however, are external helps; are enemies, with which a man, that he may fight against himself, makes league.

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[1] So in the original.

"When I considered these various methods, and farther, looked abroad over history, I could find among all suicides no one that had gone about this deed with such greatness and freedom of spirit as the Emperor Otho. This man, beaten indeed as a general, yet nowise reduced to extremities, determines, for the good of the Empire, which already in some measure belonged to him, and for the saving of so many thousands, to leave the world. With his friends he passes a gay festive night, and next morning it is found that with his own hand he has plunged a sharp dagger into his heart. This sole act seemed to me worthy of imitation; and I convinced myself that whoever could not proceed herein as Otho had done, was not entitled to resolve on renouncing life. By this conviction, I saved myself from the purpose, or indeed more properly speaking, from the whim, of suicide, which in those fair peaceful times had insinuated itself into the mind of indolent youth. Among a considerable collection of arms, I possessed a costly well-ground dagger. This I laid down nightly beside my bed; and before extinguishing the light, I tried whether I could succeed in sending the sharp point an inch or two deep into my breast. But as I truly never could succeed, I at last took to laughing at myself; threw away all these hypochondriacal crotchets, and determined to live. To do this with cheerfulness, however, I required to have some poetical task given me, wherein all that I had felt, thought or dreamed on this weighty business might be spoken forth. With such view, I endeavored to collect the elements which for a year or two had been floating about in me; I represented to myself the circumstances which had most oppressed and afflicted me. but nothing of all this would take form; there was wanting an incident, a fable, in which I might embody it.

"All at once I hear tidings of Jerusalem's death; and directly following the general rumor, came the most precise and circumstantial description of the business; and in this instant the plan of *Werter* was invented: the whole shot together from all sides, and became a solid mass; as the water in the vessel, which already stood on the point of freezing, is by the slightest motion changed at once into firm ice."[1]

A wide and everyway most important interval divides *Werter*, with its sceptical philosophy and "hypochondriacal crotchets," from Goethe's next Novel, *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, published some twenty years afterwards. This work belongs, in all senses, to the second and sounder period of Goethe's life, and may indeed serve as the fullest, if perhaps not the purest, impress of it; being written with due forethought, at various times, during a period of no less than ten years. Considered as a piece of Art, there were much to be said on *Meister;* all which, however, lies beyond our present purpose. We are here looking at the work chiefly as a document for the writer's history; and in this point of view it certainly seems, as contrasted with its more popular precursor, to deserve our best attention: for the problem which had been stated in *Werter*, with despair of its solution, is here solved. The lofty enthusiasm, which, wandering wildly over the universe, found no resting place, has here reached its appointed home: and lives in harmony with what long appeared to threaten it with annihilation. Anarchy has now become Peace; the once gloomy and perturbed spirit is now serene, cheerfully vigorous, and rich in good fruits. Neither, which is most important of all, has this Peace been attained by a surrender to Necessity, or any compact with Delusion; a seeming blessing, such as years and dispiritment will of themselves bring to most men, and which is indeed no blessing, since even continued battle is better than destruction or captivity; and peace of this sort is like that of Galgacus's Romans, who "called it peace when they had made a desert." Here the ardent high-aspiring youth has grown into the calmest man, yet with increase and not loss of ardor, and with aspirations higher as well as clearer. For he has conquered his unbelief; the Ideal has been built on the Actual; no longer floats vaguely in darkness and regions of dreams, but rests in light, on the firm ground of human interest and business, as in its true scene, on its true basis.

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[1] *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, b. iii. s. 200–213.

It is wonderful to see with what softness the scepticism of Jarno, the commercial spirit of Werner, the reposing polished manhood of Lothario and the Uncle, the unearthly enthusiasm of the Harper, the gay animal vivacity of Philina, the mystic, ethereal, almost spiritual nature of Mignon, are blended together in this work; how justice is done to each, how each lives freely in his proper element, in his proper form; and how, as Wilhelm himself, the mild-hearted, all-hoping, all-believing Wilhelm, struggles forward towards his world of Art through these curiously complected influences, all this unites itself into a multifarious, yet so harmonious Whole; as into a clear poetic mirror, where man's life and business in this age, his passions and purposes, the highest equally with the lowest, are imaged back to us in beautiful significance. Poetry and Prose are no longer at variance; for the poet's eyes are opened: he sees the changes of many-colored existence, and sees the loveliness and deep purport which lies hidden under the very meanest of them; hidden to the vulgar sight, but clear to the poet's; because the "open secret" is no longer a secret to him, and he knows that the Universe is *full* of goodness; that whatever has being has beauty.

Apart from its literary merits or demerits, such is the temper of mind we trace in Goethe's *Meister*, and, more or less expressively exhibited, in all his later works. We reckon it a rare phenomenon this temper; and worthy, in our times, if it do exist, of best study from all inquiring men. How has such a temper been attained in this so lofty and impetuous mind, once too, dark, desolate and full of doubt, more than any other? How may we, each of us in his several sphere, attain it, or strengthen it, for ourselves? These are questions, this last is a question, in which no one is unconcerned.

To answer these questions, to begin the answer of them, would lead us very far beyond our present limits. It is not, as we believe, without long, sedulous study, without learning much and unlearning much, that, for any man, the answer of such questions is even to be hoped. Meanwhile, as regards Goethe, there is one feature of the business which, to us, throws considerable light on his moral persuasions, and will not, in investigating the secret of them, be overlooked. We allude to the spirit in which he cultivates his Art; the noble, disinterested, almost religious love with which he looks on Art in general, and strives towards it as towards the sure, highest, nay only good. We extract one passage from *Wilhelm Meister:* it may pass for a piece of fine declamation, but not in that light do we offer it here. Strange, unaccountable as the thing may seem, we have actually evidence before our mind that Goethe believes in such doctrines, nay has in some sort lived and endeavored to direct his conduct by them.

"'Look at men,' continues Wilhelm, 'how they struggle after happiness and satisfaction! Their wishes, their toil, their gold, are ever hunting restlessly; and after what? After that which the Poet has received from nature; the right enjoyment of the world; the feeling of himself in others; the harmonious conjunction of many things that will seldom go together.

"'What is it that keeps men in continual discontent and agitation? It is that they cannot make realities correspond with their conceptions, that enjoyment steals away from among their hands, that the wished-for comes too late, and nothing reached and acquired produces on the heart the effect which their longing for it at a distance led them to anticipate. Now fate has exalted the Poet above all this, as if he were a god.

He views the conflicting tumult of the passions; sees families and kingdoms raging in aimless commotion; sees those perplexed enigmas of misunderstanding, which often a single syllable would explain, occasioning convulsions unutterably baleful. He has a fellow-feeling of the mournful and the joyful in the fate of all mortals. When the man of the world is devoting his days to wasting melancholy for some deep disappointment; or, in the ebullience of joy, is going out to meet his happy destiny, the lightly moved and all-conceiving spirit of the Poet steps forth, like the sun from night to day, and with soft transition tunes his harp to joy or woe. From his heart, its native soil, springs the fair flower of Wisdom; and if others while waking dream, and are pained with fantastic delusions from their every sense, he passes the dream of life like one awake, and the strangest event is to him nothing, save a part of the past and of the future. And thus the Poet is a teacher, a prophet, a friend of gods and men. How! Thou wouldst have him descend from his height to some paltry occupation? He who is fashioned, like a bird, to hover round the world, to nestle on the lofty summits, to feed on flowers and fruits, exchanging gayly one bough for another, *he* ought also to work at the plough like an ox; like a dog to train himself to the harness and draught; or perhaps, tied up in a chain, to guard a farm-yard by his barking?'

"Werner, it may well be supposed, had listened with the greatest surprise. 'All true,' he rejoined, 'if men were but made like birds; and, though they neither span nor weaved, could spend peaceful days in perpetual enjoyment: if, at the approach of winter, they could as easily betake themselves to distant regions; could retire before scarcity, and fortify themselves against frost.'

"'Poets have lived so,' exclaimed Wilhelm, 'in times when true nobleness was better reverenced; and so should they ever live. Sufficiently provided for within, they had need of little from without; the gift of imparting lofty emotions, and glorious images to men, in melodies and words that charmed the ear, and fixed themselves inseparably on whatever they might touch, of old enraptured the world, and served the gifted as a rich inheritance. At the courts of kings, at the tables of the great, under the windows of the fair, the sound of them was heard, while the ear and the soul were shut for all beside; and men felt, as we do when delight comes over us, and we pause with rapture if, among the dingles we are crossing, the voice of the nightingale starts out, touching and strong. They found a home in every habitation of the world, and the lowliness of their condition but exalted them the more. The hero listened to their songs, and the Conqueror of the Earth did reverence to a Poet; for he felt that, without poets, his own wild and vast existence would pass away like a whirlwind, and be forgotten forever. The lover wished that he could feel his longings and his joys so variedly and so harmoniously as the Poet's inspired lips had skill to show them forth; and even the rich man could not of himself discern such costliness in his idol grandeurs, as when they were presented to him shining in the splendor of the Poet's spirit, sensible to all worth, and ennobling all. Nay, if thou wilt have it, who but the Poet was it that first formed Gods for us; that exalted us to them, and brought them down to us?' "[1]

For a man of Goethe's talent to write many such pieces of rhetoric, setting forth the dignity of poets, and their innate independence on external circumstances, could be no very hard task; accordingly, we find such sentiments again and again expressed, sometimes with still more gracefulness, still clearer emphasis, in his various writings. But to adopt these sentiments into his sober practical persuasion; in any measure to feel and believe that such was still, and must always be, the high vocation of the poet; on this ground of universal humanity, of ancient and now almost forgotten nobleness, to take his stand, even in these trivial, jeering, withered, unbelieving days; and through all their complex, dispiriting, mean, yet tumultuous influences, to "make his light shine before men," that it might beautify even our "rag-gathering age" with some beams of that mild, divine splendor, which had long left us, the very possibility of which was denied:

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[1] *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship,* book ii. chap. 2.

heartily and in earnest to meditate all this, was no common proceeding; to bring it into practice, especially in such a life as his has been, was among the highest and hardest enterprises which any man whatever could engage in. We reckon this a greater novelty, than all the novelties which as a mere writer he ever put forth, whether for praise or censure. We have taken it upon us to say that if such *is*, in any sense, the state of the case with regard to Goethe, he deserves not mere approval as a pleasing poet and sweet singer; but deep, grateful study, observance, imitation, as a Moralist and Philosopher. If there be any *probability* that such is the state of the case, we cannot but reckon it a matter well worthy of being inquired into. And it is for this only that we are here pleading and arguing.

On the literary merit and meaning of *Wilhelm Meister* we have already said that we must not enter at present. The book has been translated into English: it underwent the usual judgment from our Reviews and Magazines; was to some a stone of stumbling, to others foolishness, to most an object of wonder. On the whole, it passed smoothly through the critical Assaying-house; for the Assayers have Christian dispositions, and very little time; so *Meister* was ranked, without umbrage, among the legal coin of the Minerva Press; and allowed to circulate as copper currency among the rest. That in so quick a process, a German *Friedrich d'or* might not slip through unnoticed among new and equally brilliant British brass Farthings, there is no warranting. For our critics can now criticise *impromptu*, which, though far the readiest, is nowise the surest plan. *Meister* is the mature product of the first genius of our times; and must, one would think, be different, in various respects, from the immature products of geniuses who are far from the first, and whose works spring from the brain in as many weeks as Goethe's cost him years.

Nevertheless, we quarrel with no man's verdict; for Time, which tries all things, will try this also, and bring to light the truth, both as regards criticism and thing criticised; or sink both into final darkness, which likewise will be the truth as regards them. But there is one censure which we must advert to for a moment, so singular does it seem to us. *Meister*, it appears, is a "vulgar" work; no "gentleman," we hear in certain circles, could have written it; few real gentlemen, it is insinuated, can like to read it; no real lady, unless possessed of considerable courage, should profess having read it at all. Of Goethe's "gentility" we shall leave all men to speak that have any, even the faintest knowledge of him; and with regard to the gentility of his readers, state only the following fact. Most of us have heard of the late Queen of Prussia, and know whether or not she was genteel enough, and of real ladyhood: nay, if we must prove everything, her character can be read in the *Life of Napoleon*, by Sir Walter Scott, who passes for a judge of those matters. And yet this is what we find written in the *Kunst und Alterthum* for 1824:[1] —

"Books too have their past happiness, which no chance can take away: —

'Wer nie sein Brod mit Thränen ass,
Wer nicht die kummervollen Nächte
Auf seinem Bette weinend sass,
Der kennt euch nicht, ihr himmlischen Mächte.'[2]

"These heart-broken lines a highly noble-minded, venerated Queen repeated in the cruelest exile, when cast forth to boundless misery. She made herself familiar with the Book in which these words, with many other painful experiences, are communicated, and drew from it a melancholy consolation. This influence, stretching of itself into boundless time, what is there that can obliterate?"

Here are strange diversities of taste; "national discrepancies" enough, had we time to investigate them! Nevertheless, wishing each party to retain his own special persuasions, so far as they are honest, and adapted to his intellectual position, national or individual, we cannot but believe that there is an inward and essential Truth in Art; a Truth far deeper than the dictates of mere Mode, and which, could we pierce through these dictates, would be true for all nations and all men. To arrive at this Truth, distant from every one at first, approachable by most, attainable by some small number, is the end and aim of all real study of Poetry. For such a purpose, among others, the comparison of English with foreign judgment, on works that will bear judging, forms no unprofitable help. Some day, we may translate Friedrich Schlegel's Essay on *Meister*, by way of contrast to our English animadversions on that subject. Schlegel's praise, whatever ours might do, rises sufficiently high: neither does he seem, during twenty years, to have repented of what he said; for we observe in the edition of his works, at present publishing, he repeats the whole *Character*, and even appends to it, in a separate sketch, some new assurances and elucidations.

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[1] Band v. s. 8.

[2] Who never ate his bread in sorrow,
Who never spent the darksome hours
Weeping and watching for the morrow,
He knows you not, ye unseen Powers.
Wilhelm Meister, book ii. chap. 13.

It may deserve to be mentioned here that *Meister*, at its first appearance in Germany, was received very much as it has been in England. Goethe's known character, indeed, precluded indifference there; but otherwise it was much the same. The whole guild of criticism was thrown into perplexity, into sorrow; everywhere was dissatisfaction open or concealed. Official duty impelling them to speak, some said one thing, some another; all felt in secret that they knew not what to say. Till the appearance of Schlegel's *Character*, no word, that we have seen, of the smallest chance to be decisive, or indeed to last beyond the day, had been uttered regarding it. Some regretted that the fire of *Werter* was so wonderfully abated; whisperings there might be about "lowness," "heaviness;" some spake forth boldly in behalf of suffering "virtue." Novalis was not among the speakers, but he censured the work in secret, and this for a reason which to us will seem the strangest; for its being, as we should say, a Benthamite work! Many are the bitter aphorisms we find, among his Fragments, directed against *Meister* for its prosaic, mechanical, economical, cold-hearted, altogether Utilitarian character. We English, again, call Goethe a mystic: so difficult is it to please all parties! But the good, deep, noble Novalis made the fairest amends; for notwithstanding all this, Tieck tells us, if we remember rightly, he continually returned to *Meister*, and could not but peruse and reperuse it.

On a somewhat different ground proceeded quite another sort of assault from one Pustkucher of Quedlinburg. Herr Pustkucher felt afflicted, it would seem, at the want of Patriotism and Religion too manifest in *Meister;* and determined to take what vengeance he could. By way of sequel to the *Apprenticeship*, Goethe had announced his *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*,[1] as in a state of preparation; but the book still lingered: whereupon, in the interim, forth comes this Pustkucher with a Pseudo-*Wanderjahre* of his own; satirizing, according to ability, the spirit and principles of the *Apprenticeship*. We have seen an epigram on Pustkucher and his *Wanderjahre*, attributed, with what justice we know not, to Goethe himself: whether it is his or not, it is written in his name; and seems to express accurately enough for such a purpose the relation between the parties, — in language which we had rather not translate: —

> "*Will denn von Quedlinburg aus*
> *Ein neuer Wanderer traben?*
> *Hat doch die Wallfisch seine Laus,*
> *Muss auch die meine haben.*"

So much for Pustkucher, and the rest. The true *Wanderjahre* has at length appeared: the first volume has been before the world since 1821. This Fragment, for it still continues such, is in our view one of the most perfect pieces of composition that Goethe has ever produced. We have heard something of his being at present engaged in extending or completing it:

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[1] "*Wanderjahre* denotes the period which a German artisan is, by law or usage, obliged to pass in travelling, to perfect himself in his craft, after the conclusion of his *Lehrjahre* (Apprenticeship), and before his Mastership can begin. In many guilds this custom is as old as their existence, and continues still to be indispensable: it is said to have originated in the frequent journeys of the German Emperors to Italy, and the consequent improvement observed in such workmen among their menials as had attended them thither. Most of the guilds are what is called *geschenkten*, that is, *presenting*, having presents to give to needy *wandering* brothers."

what the whole may in his hands become, we are anxious to see; but the *Wanderjahre*, even in its actual state, can hardly be called unfinished, as a piece of writing; it coheres so beautifully within itself; and yet we see not whence the wondrous landscape came, or whither it is stretching; but it hangs before us as a fairy region, hiding its borders on this side in light sunny clouds, fading away on that into the infinite azure: already, we might almost say, it gives us the notion of a *completed fragment*, or the state in which a fragment, not meant for completion, might be left.

But apart from its environment, and considered merely in itself, this *Wanderjahre* seems to us a most estimable work. There is, in truth, a singular gracefulness in it; a high, melodious Wisdom; so light is it, yet so earnest; so calm, so gay, yet so strong and deep: for the purest spirit of all Art rests over it and breathes through it; "mild Wisdom is wedded in living union to Harmony divine;" the Thought of the Sage is melted, we might say, and incorporated in the liquid music of the Poet. "It is called a Romance," observes the English Translator; "but it treats not of romance characters or subjects; it has less relation to Fielding's *Tom Jones* than to Spenser's *Faëry Queen.*" We have not forgotten what is due to Spenser; yet, perhaps, beside his immortal allegory this *Wanderjahre* may, in fact, not unfairly be named; and with this advantage, that it is an allegory not of the Seventeenth century, but of the Nineteenth; a picture full of expressiveness, of what men are striving for, and ought to strive for, in these actual days. "The scene," we are farther told, "is not laid on this firm earth; but in a fair Utopia of Art and Science and free Activity; the figures, light and aëriform, come unlooked for, and melt away abruptly, like the pageants of Prospero in his Enchanted Island." We venture to add, that, like Prospero's Island, this too is drawn from the inward depths, the purest sphere of poetic inspiration: ever, as we read it, the images of old Italian Art flit before us; the gay tints of Titian; the quaint grace of Domenichino; sometimes the clear yet unfathomable depth of Rafaelle; and whatever else we have known or dreamed of in that rich old genial world.

As it is Goethe's moral sentiments, and culture as a man, that we have made our chief object in this survey, we would fain give some adequate specimen of the *Wanderjahre,* where, as appears to us, these are to be traced in their last degree of clearness and completeness. But to do this, to find a specimen that should be adequate, were difficult, or rather impossible. How shall we divide what is in itself one and indivisible? How shall the fraction of a complex picture give us any idea of the so beautiful whole? Nevertheless, we shall refer our readers to the Tenth and Eleventh Chapters of the *Wanderjahre;* where, in poetic and symbolic style, they will find a sketch of the nature, objects and present ground of Religious Belief, which, if they have ever reflected duly on that matter, will hardly fail to interest them. They will find these chapters, if we mistake not, worthy of deep consideration; for this is the merit of Goethe: his maxims will bear study; nay they require it, and improve by it more and more. They come from the depths of his mind, and are not in their place till they have reached the depths of ours. The wisest man, we believe, may see in them a reflex of his own wisdom: but to him who is still learning, they become as seeds of knowledge; they take root in the mind, and ramify, as we meditate them, into a whole garden of thought. The sketch we mentioned is far too long for being extracted here: however, we give some scattered portions of it, which the reader will accept with fair allowance. As the wild suicidal Night-thoughts of *Werter* formed our first extract, this by way of counterpart may be the last. We must fancy Wilhelm in the "Pedagogic province," proceeding towards the "CHIEF, or the THREE," with intent to place his son under their charge, in that wonderful region, "where he was to see so many singularities."

"Wilhelm had already noticed that in the cut and color of the young people's clothes a variety prevailed, which gave the whole tiny population a peculiar aspect: he was about to question his attendant on this point, when a still stranger observation forced itself upon him: all the children, how employed soever, laid down their work, and turned, with singular yet diverse gestures, towards the party riding past them; or rather, as it was easy to infer, towards the Overseer, who was in it. The youngest laid their arms crosswise over their breasts, and looked cheerfully up to the sky; those of middle size held their hands on their backs, and looked smiling on the ground; the eldest stood with a frank and spirited air, — their arms stretched down, they turned their heads to the right, and formed themselves into a line; whereas the others kept separate, each where he chanced to be.

"The riders having stopped and dismounted here, as several children, in their various modes, were standing forth to be inspected by the Overseer, Wilhelm asked the meaning of these gestures; but Felix struck in and cried gayly: 'What posture am I to take, then?' 'Without doubt,' said the Overseer, 'the first posture: the arms over the breast, the face earnest and cheerful towards the sky.' Felix obeyed, but soon cried: 'This is not much to my taste; I see nothing up there: does it last long? But yes!' exclaimed he joyfully, 'yonder are a pair of falcons flying from the west to the east: that is a good sign too?' — 'As thou takest it, as thou behavest,' said the other: 'Now mingle among them as they mingle.' He gave a signal, and the children left their postures, and again betook them to work or sport as before."

Wilhelm a second time "asks the meaning of these gestures;" but the Overseer is not at liberty to throw much light on the matter; mentions only that they are symbolical, "nowise mere grimaces, but have a moral purport, which perhaps the CHIEF or the THREE may farther explain to him." The children themselves, it would seem, only know it in part; "secrecy having many advantages; for when you tell a man at once and straightforward the purpose of any object, he fancies there is nothing in it." By and by, however, having left Felix by the way, and parted with the Overseer, Wilhelm arrives at the abode of the Three, "who preside over sacred things," and from whom farther satisfaction is to be looked for.

"Wilhelm had now reached the gate of a wooded vale, surrounded with high walls: on a certain sign, the little door opened, and a man of earnest, imposing look received our

Traveller. The latter found himself in a large beautifully umbrageous space, decked with the richest foliage, shaded with trees and bushes of all sorts; while stately walls and magnificent buildings were discerned only in glimpses through this thick natural boscage. A friendly reception from the Three, who by and by appeared, at last turned into a general conversation, the substance of which we now present in an abbreviated shape.

"'Since you intrust your son to us,' said they, 'it is fair that we admit you to a closer view of our procedure. Of what is external you have seen much that does not bear its meaning on its front. What part of this do you wish to have explained?'

"'Dignified yet singular gestures of salutation I have noticed; the import of which I would gladly learn: with you, doubtless, the exterior has a reference to the interior, and inversely; let me know what this reference is.'

"'Well-formed healthy children,' replied the Three, 'bring much into the world along with them; Nature has given to each whatever he requires for time and duration; to unfold this is our duty; often it unfolds itself better of its own accord. One thing there is, however, which no child brings into the world with him; and yet it is on this one thing that all depends for making man in every point a man. If you can discover it yourself, speak it out.' Wilhelm thought a little while, then shook his head.

"The Three, after a suitable pause, exclaimed, 'Reverence!' Wilhelm seemed to hesitate. 'Reverence!' cried they, a second time. 'All want it, perhaps yourself.'

"'Three kinds of gestures you have seen; and we inculcate a threefold reverence, which when commingled and formed into one whole, attains its full force and effect. The first is Reverence for what is Above us. That posture, the arms crossed over the breast, the look turned joyfully towards heaven; that is what we have enjoined on young children; requiring from them thereby a testimony that there is a God above, who images and reveals himself in parents, teachers, superiors. Then comes the second; Reverence for what is Under us. Those hands folded over the back, and as it were tied together;

that down-turned smiling look, announce that we are to regard the earth with attention and cheerfulness: from the bounty of the earth we are nourished; the earth affords unutterable joys; but disproportionate sorrows she also brings us. Should one of our children do himself external hurt, blamably or blamelessly; should others hurt him accidentally or purposely; should dead involuntary matter do him hurt; then let him well consider it; for such dangers will attend him all his days. But from this posture we delay not to free our pupil, the instant we become convinced that the instruction connected with it has produced sufficient influence on him. Then, on the contrary, we bid him gather courage, and, turning to his comrades, range himself along with them. Now, at last, he stands forth, frank and bold; not selfishly isolated; only in combination with his equals does he front the world. Farther we have nothing to add.'

"'I see a glimpse of it!' said Wilhelm. 'Are not the mass of men so marred and stinted, because they take pleasure only in the element of evil-wishing and evil-speaking? Whoever gives himself to this, soon comes to be indifferent towards God, contemptuous towards the world, spiteful towards his equals; and the true, genuine, indispensable sentiment of self-estimation corrupts into self-conceit and presumption. Allow me, however,' continued he, 'to state one difficulty. You say that reverence is not natural to man: now has not the reverence or fear of rude people for violent convulsions of nature, or other inexplicable mysteriously foreboding occurrences, been heretofore regarded as the germ out of which a higher feeling, a purer sentiment, was by degrees to be developed?'

"'Nature is indeed adequate to fear,' replied they, 'but to reverence not adequate. Men fear a known or unknown powerful being; the strong seeks to conquer it, the weak to avoid it; both endeavor to get quit of it, and feel themselves happy when for a short season they have put it aside, and their nature has in some degree restored itself to freedom and independence. The natural man repeats this operation millions of times in the course of his life; from fear he struggles to freedom; from freedom he is driven back to fear, and so makes no advancement. To fear is easy, but grievous; to reverence is difficult, but satisfactory. Man does not willingly submit himself to reverence, or rather he never so submits himself: it is a higher sense which must be communicated to his nature; which only in some favored individuals unfolds itself spontaneously, who on this account too have of old been looked upon as Saints and Gods. Here lies the worth, here lies the business of all true Religions, whereof there are likewise only three, according to the objects towards which they direct our devotion.'

"The men paused; Wilhelm reflected for a time in silence; but feeling in himself no pretension to unfold these strange words, he requested the Sages to proceed with their exposition. They immediately complied. 'No Religion that grounds itself on fear,' said they, 'is regarded among us. With the reverence to which a man should give dominion in his mind, he can, in paying honor, keep his own honor; he is not disunited with himself as in the former case. The Religion which depends on Reverence for what is Above us, we denominate the Ethnic; it is the Religion of the Nations, and the first happy deliverance from a degrading fear: all Heathen religions, as we call them, are of this sort, whatsoever names they may bear. The Second Religion, which founds itself on Reverence for what is Around us, we denominate the Philosophical; for the Philosopher stations himself in the middle, and must draw down to him all that is higher, and up to him all that is lower, and only in this medium condition does he merit the title of Wise. Here as he surveys with clear sight his relation to his equals, and therefore to the whole human race, his relation likewise to all other earthly circumstances and arrangements necessary or accidental, he alone, in a cosmic sense, lives in Truth. But now we have to speak of the Third Religion, grounded on Reverence for what is Under us: this we name the Christian; as in the Christian Religion such a temper is the most distinctly manifested: it is a last step to which mankind were fitted and destined to attain. But what a task was it, not only to be patient with the Earth, and let it lie beneath us, we appealing to a higher birthplace; but also to recognize humility and poverty, mockery and despite, disgrace and wretchedness, suffering and death, to recognize these things as divine; nay, even on sin and crime to look not as hindrances, but to honor and love them as furtherances, of what is holy. Of this, indeed, we find some traces in all ages: but the trace is not the goal; and this being now attained, the human species cannot retrograde; and we may say that the Christian Religion, having once appeared, cannot again vanish; having once assumed its divine shape, can be subject to no dissolution.'

"'To which of these Religions do you specially adhere?' inquired Wilhelm.

"'To all the three,' replied they; 'for in their union they produce what may properly be called the true Religion. Out of those three Reverences springs the highest Reverence, Reverence for Oneself, and these again unfold themselves from this; so that man attains the highest elevation of which he is capable, that of being justified in reckoning himself the Best that God and Nature have produced; nay, of being able to continue on this lofty eminence, without being again by self-conceit and presumption drawn down from it into the vulgar level.'"

The Three undertake to admit him into the interior of their Sanctuary; whither, accordingly, he, "at the hand of the Eldest," proceeds on the morrow. Sorry are we that we cannot follow them into the "octagonal hall," so full of paintings, and the "gallery open on one side, and stretching round a spacious, gay, flowery garden." It is a beautiful figurative representation, by pictures and symbols of Art, of the First and the Second Religions, the Ethnic and the Philosophical; for the former of which the pictures have been composed from the Old Testament; for the latter from the New. We can only make room for some small portions.

"'I observe,' said Wilhelm, 'you have done the Israelites the honor to select their history as the groundwork of this delineation, or rather you have made it the leading object there.'

"'As you see,' replied the Eldest; 'for you will remark, that on the socles and friezes we have introduced another series of transactions and occurrences, not so much of a synchronistic as of a symphronistic kind; since, among all nations, we discover records of a similar import, and grounded on the same facts. Thus you perceive here, while, in the main field of the picture, Abraham receives a visit from his gods in the form of fair youths, Apollo among the herdsmen of Admetus is painted above on the frieze. From which we may learn, that the gods, when they appear to men, are commonly unrecognized of them.'

"The friends walked on. Wilhelm, for the most part, met with well-known objects; but they were here exhibited in a livelier, more expressive manner, than he had been used to see them. On some few matters he requested explanation, and at last could not help returning to his former question: 'Why the Israelitish history had been chosen in preference to all others?'

"The Eldest answered: 'Among all Heathen religions, for such also is the Israelitish, this has the most distinguished advantages; of which I shall mention only a few. At the Ethnic judgment-seat; at the judgment-seat of the God of Nations, it is not asked whether this is the best, the most excellent nation; but whether it lasts, whether it has continued. The Israelitish people never was good for much, as its own leaders, judges, rulers, prophets, have a thousand times reproachfully declared; it possesses few virtues, and most of the faults of other nations: but in cohesion, steadfastness, valor, and when all this would not serve, in obstinate toughness, it has no match. It is the most perseverant nation in the world; it is, it was and it will be, to glorify the name of Jehovah through all ages. We have set it up, therefore, as the pattern figure; as the main figure to which the others only serve as a frame.'

"'It becomes not me to dispute with you,' said Wilhelm, 'since you have instruction to impart. Open to me, therefore, the other advantages of this people, or rather of its history, of its religion.'

"'One chief advantage,' said the other, 'is its excellent collection of Sacred Books. These stand so happily combined together, that even out of the most diverse elements, the feeling of a whole still rises before us. They are complete enough to satisfy; fragmentary enough to excite; barbarous enough to rouse; tender enough to appease; and for how many other contradicting merits might not these Books, might not this one Book, be praised?'

. . . . .

"Thus wandering on, they had now reached the gloomy and perplexed periods of the History, the destruction of the City and the Temple, the murder, exile, slavery of whole masses of this stiff-necked people. Its subsequent fortunes were delineated in a cunning allegorical way; a real historical delineation of them would have lain without the limits of true Art.

"At this point, the gallery abruptly terminated in a closed door, and Wilhelm was surprised to see himself already at the end. 'In your historical series,' said he, 'I find a chasm. You have destroyed the Temple of Jerusalem, and dispersed the people; yet you have not introduced the divine Man who taught there shortly before; to whom, shortly before, they would give no ear.'

"'To have done this, as you require it, would have been an error. The life of that divine Man, whom you allude to, stands in no connection with the general history of the world in his time. It was a private life, his teaching was a teaching for individuals. What has publicly befallen vast masses of people, and the minor parts which compose them, belongs to the general History of the World, to the general Religion of the World; the Religion we have named the First. What inwardly befalls individuals belongs to the Second Religion, the Philosophical: such a Religion was it that Christ taught and practised, so long as he went about on Earth. For this reason, the external here closes, and I now open to you the internal.'

"A door went back, and they entered a similar gallery; where Wilhelm soon recognized a corresponding series of Pictures from the New Testament. They seemed as if by another hand than the first: all was softer; forms, movements, accompaniments, light and coloring."

Into this second gallery, with its strange doctrine about "Miracles and Parables," the characteristic of the Philosophical Religion, we cannot enter for the present, yet must give one hurried glance. Wilhelm expresses some surprise that these delineations terminate "with the Supper, with the scene where the Master and his Disciples part." He inquires for the remaining portion of the history.

"'In all sorts of instruction,' said the Eldest, 'in all sorts of communication, we are fond of separating whatever it is possible to separate; for by this means alone can the notion of importance and peculiar significance arise in the young mind. Actual experience of itself mingles and mixes all things together: here, accordingly, we have entirely disjoined that sublime Man's life from its termination. In life, he appears as a true Philosopher, — let not the expression stagger you, — as a Wise Man in the highest sense. He stands firm to his point; he goes on his way inflexibly, and while he exalts the lower to himself, while he makes the ignorant, the poor, the sick, partakers of his wisdom, of his riches, of his strength, he, on the other hand, in no wise conceals his divine origin; he dares to equal himself with God, nay to declare that he himself is God. In this manner he is wont, from youth upwards, to astound his familiar friends; of these he gains a part to his own cause; irritates the rest against him; and shows to all men, who are aiming at a certain elevation in doctrine and life, what they have to look for from the world. And thus, for the noble portion of mankind, his walk and conversation are even more instructive and profitable than his death: for to those trials every one is called, to this trial but a few. Now, omitting all that results from this consideration, do but look at the touching scene of the Last Supper. Here the Wise Man, as it ever is, leaves those that are his own utterly orphaned behind him; and while he is careful for the Good, he feeds along with them a traitor, by whom he and the Better are to be destroyed.'"

This seems to us to have "a deep, still meaning;" and the longer and closer we examine it, the more it pleases us. Wilhelm is not admitted into the shrine of the Third Religion, the Christian, or that of which Christ's sufferings and death were the symbol, as his walk and conversation had been the symbol of the Second, or Philosophical Religion. "That last Religion," it is said, —

"'That last Religion, which arises from the Reverence of what is Beneath us; that veneration of the contradictory, the hated, the avoided, we give to each of our pupils, in small portions, by way of outfit, along with him into the world, merely that he may know where more is to be had, should such a want spring up within him. I invite you to return hither at the end of a year, to attend our general Festival, and see how far your son is advanced: then shall you be admitted into the Sanctuary of Sorrow.'

"'Permit me one question,' said Wilhelm: 'as you have set up the life of this divine Man for a pattern and example, have you likewise selected his sufferings, his death, as a model of exalted patience?'

"'Undoubtedly we have,' replied the Eldest. 'Of this we make no secret; but we draw a veil over those sufferings, even because we reverence them so highly. We hold it a damnable audacity to bring forth that torturing Cross, and the Holy One who suffers on it, or to expose them to the light of the Sun, which hid its face when a reckless world forced such a sight on it; to take these mysterious secrets, in which the divine depth of Sorrow lies hid, and play with them, fondle them, trick them out, and rest not till the most reverend of all solemnities appears vulgar and paltry. Let so much for the present suffice — . . . The rest we must still owe you for a twelvemonth. The instruction, which in the interim we give the children, no stranger is allowed to witness: then, however, come to us, and you will hear what our best Speakers think it serviceable to make public on those matters.'"

Could we hope that, in its present disjointed state, this emblematic sketch would rise before the minds of our readers in any measure as it stood before the mind of the writer; that, in considering it, they might seize only an outline of those many meanings which, at less or greater depth, lie hidden under it, we should anticipate their thanks for having, a first or a second time, brought it before them. As it is, believing that, to open-minded truth-seeking men, the deliberate words of an open-minded truth-seeking man can in no case be wholly unintelligible, nor the words of such a man as Goethe indifferent, we have transcribed it for their perusal. If we induce them to turn to the original, and study this in its completeness, with so much else that environs it and bears on it, they will thank us still more. To our own judgment at least, there is a fine and pure significance in this whole delineation: such phrases even as the "Sanctuary of Sorrow," the "divine depth of Sorrow," have of themselves a pathetic wisdom for us; as indeed a tone of devoutness, of calm, mild, priest-like dignity pervades the whole. In a time like ours, it is rare to see, in the writings of cultivated men, any opinion whatever bearing any mark of sincerity on such a subject as this: yet it is and continues the highest subject, and they that are highest are most fit for studying it, and helping others to study it.

Goethe's *Wanderjahre* was published in his seventy-second year; *Werter* in his twenty-fifth: thus in passing between these two works, and over *Meisters Lehrjahre*, which stands nearly midway, we have glanced over a space of almost fifty years, including within them, of course, whatever was most important in his public or private history. By means of these quotations, so diverse in their tone, we meant to make it visible that a great change had taken place in the moral disposition of the man; a change from inward imprisonment, doubt and discontent, into freedom, belief and clear activity: such a change as, in our opinion, must take place, more or less consciously, in every character that, especially in these times, attains to spiritual manhood; and in characters possessing any thoughtfulness and sensibility, will seldom take place without a too painful consciousness, without bitter conflicts, in which the character itself is too often maimed and impoverished, and which end too often not in victory, but in defeat, or fatal compromise with the enemy. Too often, we may well say; for though many gird on the harness, few bear it warrior-like; still fewer put it off with triumph. Among our own poets, Byron was almost the only man we saw faithfully and manfully struggling, to the end, in this cause; and he died while the victory was still doubtful, or at best, only beginning to be gained. We have already stated our opinion, that Goethe's success in this matter has been more complete than that of any other man in his age; nay that, in the strictest sense, he may almost be called the only one that has so succeeded. On this ground, were it on no other, we have ventured to say, that his spiritual history and procedure must deserve attention; that his opinions, his creations, his mode of thought, his whole picture of the world as it dwells within him, must to his contemporaries be an inquiry of no common interest; of an interest altogether peculiar, and not in this degree exampled in existing literature. These things can be but imperfectly stated here, and must be left, not in a state of demonstration, but, at the utmost, of loose fluctuating probability; nevertheless, if inquired into, they will be found to have a precise enough meaning, and, as we believe, a highly important one.

For the rest, what sort of mind it is that has passed through this change, that has gained this victory; how rich and high a mind; how learned by study in all that is wisest, by experience in all that is most complex, the brightest as well as the blackest, in man's existence; gifted with what insight, with what grace and power of utterance, we shall not for the present attempt discussing. All these the reader will learn, who studies his writings with such attention as they merit: and by no other means. Of Goethe's dramatic, lyrical, didactic poems, in their thousand-fold expressiveness, for they are full of expressiveness, we can here say nothing. But in every department of Literature, of Art ancient and modern, in many provinces of Science, we shall often meet him; and hope to have other occasions of estimating what, in these respects, we and all men owe him.

Two circumstances, meanwhile, we have remarked, which to us throw light on the nature of his original faculty for Poetry, and go far to convince us of the Mastery he has attained in that art: these we may here state briefly, for the judgment of such as already know his writings, or the help of such as are beginning to know them. The first is, his singularly emblematic intellect; his perpetual never-failing tendency to transform into *shape*, into *life*, the opinion, the feeling that may dwell in him; which, in its widest sense, we reckon to be essentially the grand problem of the Poet. We do not mean mere metaphor and rhetorical trope: these are but the exterior concern, often but the scaffolding of the edifice, which is to be built up (within our thoughts) by means of them. In allusions, in similitudes, though no one known to us is happier, many are more copious, than Goethe. But we find this faculty of his in the very essence of his intellect; and trace it alike in the quiet cunning epigram, the allegory, the quaint device, reminding us of some Quarles or Bunyan; and in the *Fausts*, the *Tassos*, the *Mignons*, which in their pure and genuine personality, may almost remind us of the *Ariels* and *Hamlets* of Shakspeare. Everything has form, everything has visual existence; the poet's imagination *bodies forth* the forms of things unseen, his pen turns them to *shape*. This, as a natural endowment, exists in Goethe, we conceive, to a very high degree.

The other characteristic of his mind, which proves to us his acquired mastery in art, as this shows us the extent of his original capacity for it, is his wonderful variety, nay universality; his entire freedom from Mannerism. We read Goethe for years, before we come to see wherein the distinguishing peculiarity of his understanding, of his disposition, even of his way of writing, consists. It seems quite a simple style that of his; remarkable chiefly for its calmness, its perspicuity, in short its commonness; and yet it is the most uncommon of all styles: we feel as if every one might imitate it, and yet it is inimitable. As hard is it to discover in his writings, — though there also, as in every man's writings, the character of the writer must lie recorded, — what sort of spiritual construction he has, what are his temper, his affections, his individual specialities. For all lives freely within him: Philina and Clärchen, Mephistopheles and Mignon, are alike indifferent, or alike dear to him; he is of no sect or caste: he seems not this man, or that man, but a man. We reckon this to be the characteristic of a Master in Art of any sort; and true especially of all great Poets. How true is it of Shakspeare and Homer! Who knows, or can figure what the Man Shakspeare was, by the first, by the twentieth, perusal of his works? He is a Voice coming to us from the Land of Melody: his old brick dwelling-place, in the mere earthly burgh of Stratford-on-Avon, offers us the most inexplicable enigma. And what is Homer in the *Ilias?* He is THE WITNESS; he has seen, and he reveals it; we hear and believe, but do not behold him. Now compare, with these two Poets, any other two; not of equal genius, for there are none such, but of equal sincerity, who wrote as earnestly, and from the heart, like them. Take, for instance, Jean Paul and Lord Byron. The good Richter begins to show himself, in his broad, massive, kindly, quaint significance, before we have read many pages of even his slightest work; and to the last, he paints himself much better than his subject. Byron may also be said to have painted nothing else than himself, be his subject what it might. Yet as a test for the culture of a Poet, in his poetical capacity, for his pretensions to mastery and completeness in his art, we cannot but reckon this among the surest. Tried by this, there is no living writer that approaches within many degrees of Goethe.

Thus, it would seem, we consider Goethe to be a richly educated Poet, no less than a richly educated Man; a master both of Humanity and of Poetry; one to whom Experience has given true wisdom, and the "Melodies Eternal" a perfect utterance for his wisdom. Of the particular form which this humanity, this wisdom has assumed; of his opinions, character, personality, — for these, with whatever difficulty, are and must be decipherable in his writings, — we had much to say: but this also we must decline. In the present state of matters, to speak adequately would be a task too hard for us, and one in which our readers could afford little help, nay in which many of them might take little interest. Meanwhile, we have found a brief cursory sketch on this subject, already written in our language: some parts of it, by way of preparation, we shall here transcribe. It is written by a professed admirer of Goethe; nay, as might almost seem, by a grateful learner, whom he had taught, whom he had helped to lead out of spiritual obstruction, into peace and light. Making due allowance for all this, there is little in the paper that we object to.

"In Goethe's mind," observes he, "the first aspect that strikes us is its calmness, then its beauty; a deeper inspection reveals to us its vastness and unmeasured strength. This man rules, and is not ruled. The stern and fiery energies of a most passionate soul lie silent in the centre of his being; a trembling sensibility has been inured to stand, without flinching or murmur, the sharpest trials. Nothing outward, nothing inward, shall agitate or control him. The brightest and most capricious fancy, the most piercing and inquisitive intellect, the wildest and deepest imagination; the highest thrills of joy, the bitterest pangs of sorrow: all these are his, he is not theirs. While he moves every heart from its steadfastness, his own is firm and still: the words that search into the inmost recesses of our nature, he pronounces with a tone of coldness and equanimity; in the deepest pathos he weeps not, or his tears are like water trickling from a rock of adamant. He is king of himself and of his world; nor does he rule it like a vulgar great man, like a Napoleon or Charles the Twelfth, by the mere brute exertion of his will, grounded on no principle, or on a false one: his faculties and feelings are not fettered or prostrated under the iron sway of Passion, but led and guided in kindly union under the mild sway of Reason; as the fierce primeval elements of Chaos were stilled at the coming of Light, and bound together, under its soft vesture, into a glorious and beneficent Creation.

"This is the true Rest of man; the dim aim of every human soul, the full attainment of only a chosen few. It comes not unsought to any; but the wise are wise because they think no price too high for it. Goethe's inward home has been reared by slow and laborious efforts; but it stands on no hollow or deceitful basis: for his peace is not from blindness, but from clear vision; not from uncertain hope of alteration, but from sure insight into what cannot alter. His world seems once to have been desolate and baleful as that of the darkest sceptic: but he has covered it anew with beauty and solemnity, derived from deeper sources, over which Doubt can have no sway. He has inquired fearlessly, and fearlessly searched out and denied the False; but he has not forgotten, what is equally essential and infinitely harder, to search out and admit the True. His heart is still full of warmth, though his head is clear and cold; the world for him is still full of grandeur, though he clothes it with no false colors; his fellow-creatures are still objects of reverence and love, though their basenesses are plainer to no eye than to his. To reconcile these contradictions is the task of all good men, each for himself, in his own way and manner; a task which, in our age, is encompassed with difficulties peculiar to the time; and which Goethe seems to have accomplished with a success that few can rival. A mind so in unity with itself, even though it were a poor and small one, would arrest our attention, and win some kind regard from us; but when this mind ranks among the strongest and most complicated of the species, it becomes a sight full of interest, a study full of deep instruction.

"Such a mind as Goethe's is the fruit not only of a royal endowment by Nature, but also of a culture proportionate to her bounty. In Goethe's original form of spirit we discern the highest gifts of manhood, without any deficiency of the lower: he has an eye and a heart equally for the sublime, the common, and the ridiculous; the elements at once of a poet, a thinker, and a wit. Of his culture we have often spoken already; and it deserves again to be held up to praise and imitation. This, as he himself unostentatiously confesses, has been the soul of all his conduct, the great enterprise of his life; and few that understand him will be apt to deny that he has prospered. As a writer, his resources have been accumulated from nearly all the provinces of human intellect and activity; and he has trained himself to use these complicated instruments with a light expertness which we might have admired in the professor of a solitary department. Freedom, and grace, and smiling earnestness are the characteristics of his works: the matter of them flows along in chaste abundance, in the softest combination; and their style is referred to by native critics as the highest specimen of the German tongue.

. . . . .

"But Goethe's culture as a writer is perhaps less remarkable than his culture as a man. He has learned not in head only, but also in heart; not from Art and Literature, but also by action and passion, in the rugged school of Experience. If asked what was the grand characteristic of his writings, we should not say knowledge, but wisdom. A mind that has seen, and suffered, and done, speaks to us of what it has tried and conquered. A gay delineation will give us notice of dark and toilsome experiences, of business done in the great deep of the spirit; a maxim, trivial to the careless eye, will rise with light and solution over long perplexed periods of our own history. It is thus that heart speaks to heart, that the life of one man becomes a possession to all. Here is a mind of the most subtle and tumultuous elements; but it is governed in peaceful diligence, and its impetuous and ethereal faculties work softly together for good and noble ends. Goethe may be called a Philosopher; for he loves and has practised as a man the wisdom which as a poet he inculcates. Composure and cheerful seriousness seem to breathe over all his character. There is no whining over human woes: it is understood that we must simply all strive to alleviate or remove them. There is no noisy battling for opinions; but a persevering effort to make Truth lovely, and recommend her, by a thousand avenues, to the hearts of all men. Of his personal manners we can easily believe the universal report, as often given in the way of censure as of praise, that he is a man of consummate breeding and the stateliest presence: for an air of polished tolerance, of courtly, we might almost say, majestic repose and serene humanity, is visible throughout his works. In no line of them does he speak with asperity of any man; scarcely ever even of a thing. He knows the good, and loves it; he knows the bad and hateful, and rejects it; but in neither case with violence: his love is calm and active; his rejection is implied, rather than pronounced; meek and gentle, though we see that it is thorough, and never to be revoked. The noblest and the basest he not only seems to comprehend, but to personate and body forth in their most secret lineaments: hence actions and opinions appear to him as they are, with all the circumstances which extenuate or endear them to the hearts where they originated and are entertained. This also is the spirit of our Shakspeare, and perhaps of every great dramatic poet. Shakspeare is no sectarian; to all he deals with equity and mercy; because he knows all, and his heart is wide enough for all. In his mind the world is a whole; he figures it as Providence governs it; and to him it is not strange that the sun should be caused to shine on the evil and the good, and the rain to fall on the just and the unjust."

Considered as a transient far-off view of Goethe in his personal character, all this, from the writer's peculiar point of vision, may have its true grounds, and wears at least the aspect of sincerity. We may also quote something of what follows on Goethe's character as a poet and thinker, and the contrast he exhibits in this respect with another celebrated and now altogether European author.

"Goethe," observes this Critic, "has been called the 'German Voltaire;' but it is a name which does him wrong and describes him ill. Except in the corresponding variety of their pursuits and knowledge in which, perhaps, it does Voltaire wrong, the two cannot be compared. Goethe is all, or the best of all, that Voltaire was, and he is much that Voltaire did not dream of. To say nothing of his dignified and truthful character as a man, he belongs, as a thinker and a writer, to a far higher class than this *enfant gâté du monde qu'il gâta*. He is not a questioner and a despiser, but a teacher and a reverencer; not a destroyer, but a builder-up; not a wit only, but a wise man. Of him Montesquieu could not have said, with even epigrammatic truth: *Il a plus que personne l'esprit que tout le monde a.* Voltaire is the *cleverest* of all past and present men; but a great man is something more, and this he surely was not."

Whether this epigram, which we have seen in some Biographical Dictionary, really belongs to Montesquieu, we know not; but it does seem to us not wholly inapplicable to Voltaire, and at all events, highly expressive of an important distinction among men of talent generally. In fact, the popular man, and the man of true, at least of great originality, are seldom one and the same; we suspect that, till after a long struggle on the part of the latter, they are never so. Reasons are obvious enough. The popular man stands on our own level, or a hair's-breadth higher; he shows us a truth which we can see without shifting our present intellectual position. This is a highly convenient arrangement. The original man, again, stands above us; he wishes to wrench us from our old fixtures, and elevate us to a higher and clearer level: but to quit our old fixtures, especially if we have sat in them with moderate comfort for some score or two of years, is no such easy business; accordingly we demur, we resist, we even give battle; we still suspect that he is above us, but try to persuade ourselves (Laziness and Vanity earnestly assenting) that he is below. For is it not the very essence of such a man that he be *new?* And who will warrant us that, at the same time, he shall only be an intensation and continuation of the *old*, which, in general, is what we long and look for? No one can warrant us. And, granting him to be a man of real genius, real depth, and that speaks not till after earnest meditation, what sort of a philosophy were his, could *we* estimate the length, breadth and thickness of it at a single glance? And when did Criticism give two glances? Criticism, therefore, opens on such a man its greater and its lesser batteries, on every side: he has no security but to go on disregarding it; and "in the end," says Goethe, "Criticism itself comes to relish that method." But now let a speaker of the other class come forward; one of those men that "have more than any one, the opinion which all men have"! No sooner does he speak, than all and sundry of us feel as if we had been wishing to speak, that very thing, as if we ourselves might have spoken it; and forthwith resounds from the united universe a celebration of that surprising feat. What clearness, brilliancy, justness, penetration! Who can doubt that this man is right, when so many thousand votes are ready to back him? Doubtless, he is right; doubtless, he is a clever man; and his praise will long be in all the Magazines.

Clever men are good, but they are not the best. "The instruction they can give us is like baked bread, savory and satisfying for a single day;" but, unhappily, "flour cannot be sown, and seed-corn ought not to be ground." We proceed with our Critic in his contrast of Goethe with Voltaire.

"As poets," continues he, "the two live not in the same hemisphere, not in the same world. Of Voltaire's poetry, it were blindness to deny the polished, intellectual vigor, the logical symmetry, the flashes that from time to time give it the color, if not the warmth, of fire: but it is in a far other sense than this that Goethe is a poet; in a sense of which the French literature has never afforded any example. We may venture to say of him, that his province is high and peculiar; higher than any poet but himself, for several generations, has so far succeeded in, perhaps even has steadfastly attempted. In reading Goethe's poetry, it perpetually strikes us that we are reading the poetry of our own day and generation. No demands are made on our credulity; the light, the science, the scepticism of our age, is not hid from us. He does not deal in antiquated mythologies, or ring changes on traditionary poetic forms; there are no supernal, no infernal influences, — for *Faust* is an apparent, rather than a real exception; — but there is the barren prose of the nineteenth century, the vulgar life which we are all leading, and it starts into strange beauty in his hands, and we pause in delighted wonder to behold the flowerage of poesy blooming in that parched and rugged soil. This is the end of his Mignons and Harpers, of his *Hermanns* and *Meisters*. Poetry, as he views it, exists not in time or place, but in the spirit of man; and Art with Nature is now to perform for the poet what Nature alone performed of old. The divinities and demons, the witches, spectres and fairies, are vanished from the world, never again to be recalled: but the Imagination, which created these, still lives, and will forever live, in man's soul; and can again pour its wizard light over the Universe, and summon forth enchantments as lovely or impressive, and which its sister faculties will not contradict. To say that Goethe has accomplished all this, would be to say that his genius is greater than was ever given to any man: for if it was a high and glorious mind, or rather series of minds, that peopled the first ages with their peculiar forms of poetry, it must be a series of minds much higher and more glorious that shall so people the present. The angels and demons that can lay prostrate our hearts in the nineteenth century, must be of another and more cunning fashion than those who subdued us in the ninth. To have attempted, to have begun this enterprise, may be accounted the greatest praise. That Goethe ever meditated it, in the form here set forth, we have no direct evidence: but, indeed, such is the end and aim of high poetry at all times and seasons; for the fiction of the poet is not falsehood, but the purest truth; and, if he would lead captive our whole being, not rest satisfied with a part of it, he must address us on interests that *are*, not that *were* ours; and in a dialect which finds a response, and not a contradiction, within our bosoms."[1]

Here, however, we must terminate our pilferings or open robberies, and bring these straggling lucubrations to a close. In the extracts we have given, in the remarks made on them and on the subject of them, we are aware that we have held the attitude of admirers and pleaders: neither is it unknown to us that the critic is, in virtue of his office, a judge, and not an advocate; sits there, not to do favor, but to dispense justice, which in most cases will involve blame as well as praise. But we are firm believers in the maxim that, for all right judgment of any man or thing, it is useful, nay essential, to see his good qualities before pronouncing on his bad. This maxim is so clear to ourselves, that, in respect to poetry at least, we almost think we could make it clear to other men. In the first place, at all events, it is a much shallower and more ignoble occupation to detect faults than to discover beauties. The "critic fly," if it do but alight on any plinth or single cornice of a brave stately building, shall be able to declare, with its half-inch vision, that here is a speck, and there an inequality; that, in fact, this and the other individual stone are nowise as they should be; for all this the "critic fly" will be sufficient: but to take in the fair relations of the Whole, to see the building as one object, to estimate its purpose, the adjustment of its parts, and their harmonious co-operation towards that purpose, will require the eye and the mind of a Vitruvius or a Palladio. But farther, the faults of a poem, or other piece of art, as we view them at first, will by no means continue unaltered when we view them after due and final investigation. Let us consider what we mean by a fault. By the word fault we designate something that displeases us, that contradicts us. But here the question might arise: who are *we?* This fault displeases, contradicts *us ;* so far is clear ; and had *we*, had *I*, and *my* pleasure and confirmation been the chief end of the poet, then doubtless he has failed in that end, and his fault remains a fault irremediably, and without defence. But who shall say whether such really was his object, whether such ought to have been his object? And if it was not, and ought not to have been, what becomes of the fault? It must hang altogether undecided; we as yet know nothing of it; perhaps it may not be the poet's, but our own fault; perhaps it may be no fault whatever. To see rightly into this matter, to determine with any infallibility, whether what we call a fault *is* in very deed a fault, we must previously have settled two points, neither of which may be so readily settled. First, we must have made plain to ourselves what the poet's aim really and truly was, how the task he had to do stood before his own eye, and how far, with such means as it afforded him, he has fulfilled it. Secondly, we must have decided whether and how far this aim, this task of his, accorded, — not with *us*, and our individual crotchets, and the crotchets of our little senate where we give or take the law, — but with human nature, and the nature of things at large; with the universal principles of poetic beauty, not as they stand written in our text-books, but in the hearts and imaginations of all men. Does the answer in either case come out unfavorable; was there an inconsistency between the means and the end, a discordance between the end and truth, there is a fault: was there not, there is no fault.

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[1] Appendix, I. No. 2. § *Goethe*, infra.

Thus it would appear that the detection of faults, provided they be faults of any depth and consequence, leads us of itself into that region where also the higher beauties of the piece, if it have any true beauties, essentially reside. In fact, according to our view, no man can pronounce dogmatically, with even a chance of being right, on the faults of a poem, till he has seen its very last and highest beauty ; the last in becoming visible to any one, which few ever look after, which indeed in most pieces it were very vain to look after ; the beauty of the poem as a Whole, in the strict sense ; the clear view of it as an indivisible Unity ; and whether it has grown up naturally from the general soil of Thought, and stands there like a thousand-years Oak, no leaf, no bough superfluous ; or is nothing but a pasteboard Tree, cobbled together out of size and waste-paper and water-colors ; altogether unconnected with the soil of Thought, except by mere juxtaposition, or at best united with it by some decayed *stump* and *dead boughs,* which the more cunning Decorationist (as in your Historic Novel) may have selected for the basis and support of his agglutinations. It is true, most readers judge of a poem by pieces, they praise and blame by pieces ; it is a common practice, and for most poems and most readers may be perfectly sufficient : yet we would advise no man to follow this practice, who traces in himself even the slightest capability of following a better one ; and, if possible, we would advise him to practise only on worthy subjects ; to read few poems that will not bear being studied as well as read.

That Goethe has his faults cannot be doubtful ; for we believe it was ascertained long ago that there is no man free from them. Neither are we ourselves without some glimmering of certain actual limitations and inconsistencies by which he too, as he really lives and writes and is, may be hemmed in ; which beset him too, as they do meaner men ; which show us that he too is a son of Eve. But to exhibit these before our readers, in the present state of matters, we should reckon no easy labor, were it to be adequately, to be justly done ; and done anyhow, no profitable one. Better is it we should first study him ; better to "*see* the great man before attempting to *oversee* him." We are not ignorant that certain objections against Goethe already float vaguely in the English mind, and here and there, according to occasion, have even come to utterance: these, as the study of him proceeds, we shall hold ourselves ready, in due season, to discuss; but for the present we must beg the reader to believe, on our word, that we do not reckon them unanswerable, nay that we reckon them in general the most answerable things in the world; and things which even a little increase of knowledge will not fail to answer without other help.

For furthering such increase of knowledge on this matter, may we beg the reader to accept two small pieces of advice, which we ourselves have found to be of use in studying Goethe. They seem applicable to the study of Foreign Literature generally; indeed to the study of all Literature that deserves the name.

The first is, nowise to suppose that Poetry is a superficial, cursory business, which may be seen through to the very bottom, so soon as one inclines to cast his eye on it. We reckon it the falsest of all maxims, that a true Poem can be adequately *tasted;* can be judged of "as men judge of a dinner," by some internal *tongue*, that shall decide on the matter at once and irrevocably. Of the poetry which supplies spouting-clubs, and circulates in circulating libraries, we speak not here. That is quite another species; which has circulated, and will circulate, and ought to circulate, in all times; but for the study of which no man is required to give rules, the rules being already given by the thing itself. We speak of that Poetry which Masters write, which aims not at "furnishing a languid mind with fantastic shows and indolent emotions," but at incorporating the everlasting Reason of man in forms visible to his Sense, and suitable to it: and of this we say, that to know it is no slight task; but rather that, being the essence of all science, it requires the purest of all study for knowing it. "What!" cries the reader, "are we to *study* Poetry? To pore over it as we do over Fluxions?" Reader, it depends upon your object: if you want only *amusement*, choose your book, and you get along, without study, excellently well. "But is not Shakspeare plain, visible to the very bottom, without study?" cries he. Alas, no, gentle Reader; we cannot think so; we do not find that he is visible to the very bottom even to those that profess the study of him. It has been our lot to read some criticisms on Shakspeare, and to hear a great many; but for most part they amounted to no such "visibility." Volumes we have seen that were simply one huge Interjection printed over three hundred pages. Nine-tenths of our critics have told us little more of Shakspeare than what honest Franz Horn says our neighbors used to tell of him, "that he was a great spirit, and stept majestically along." Johnson's Preface, a sound and solid piece for its purpose, is a complete exception to this rule; and, so far as we remember, the only complete one. Students of poetry admire Shakspeare in their tenth year; but go on admiring him more and more, understanding him more and more, till their threescore-and-tenth. Grotius said, he read Terence otherwise than boys do. "Happy contractedness of youth," adds Goethe, "nay of men in general; that at all moments of their existence they can look upon themselves as complete; and inquire neither after the True nor the False, nor the High nor the Deep; but simply after what is proportioned to themselves."

Our second advice we shall state in few words. It is, to remember that a Foreigner is no Englishman; that in judging a foreign work, it is not enough to ask whether it is suitable to our *modes*, but whether it is suitable to foreign *wants;* above all, whether it is suitable to *itself.* The fairness, the necessity of this can need no demonstration; yet how often do we find it, in practice, altogether neglected! We could fancy we saw some Bond-Street Tailor criticising the costume of an ancient Greek; censuring the highly improper cut of collar and lapel; lamenting, indeed, that collar and lapel were nowhere to be seen. He pronounces the costume, easily and decisively, to be a barbarous one: to know whether it *is* a barbarous one, and how barbarous, the judgment of a Winkelmann might be required, and he would find it hard to give a judgment. For the questions set before the two were radically different. The Fraction asked himself: How will this look in Almacks, and before Lord Mahogany? The Winkelmann asked himself: How will this look in the Universe, and before the Creator of Man?

Whether these remarks of ours may do anything to forward a right appreciation of Goethe in this country, we know not; neither do we reckon this last result to be of any vital importance. Yet must we believe that, in recommending Goethe, we are doing our part to recommend a truer study of Poetry itself; and happy were we to fancy that any efforts of ours could promote such an object. Promoted, attained it will be, as we believe, by one means and another. A deeper feeling for Art is abroad over Europe; a purer, more earnest purpose in the study, in the practice of it. In this influence we too must participate: the time will come when our own ancient noble Literature will be studied and felt, as well as talked of; when Dilettantism will give place to Criticism in respect of it; and vague wonder end in clear knowledge, in sincere reverence, and, what were best of all, in hearty emulation.

BURNS.[1]

[1828.]

In the modern arrangements of society, it is no uncommon thing that a man of genius must, like Butler, "ask for bread and receive a stone;" for, in spite of our grand maxim of supply and demand, it is by no means the highest excellence that men are most forward to recognize. The inventor of a spinning-jenny is pretty sure of his reward in his own day; but the writer of a true poem, like the apostle of a true religion, is nearly as sure of the contrary. We do not know whether it is not an aggravation of the injustice, that there is generally a posthumous retribution. Robert Burns, in the course of Nature, might yet have been living; but his short life was spent in toil and penury; and he died, in the prime of his manhood, miserable and neglected: and yet already a brave mausoleum shines over his dust, and more than one splendid monument has been reared in other places to his fame; the street where he languished in poverty is called by his name; the highest personages in our literature have been proud to appear as his commentators and admirers; and here is the *sixth* narrative of his *Life* that has been given to the world!

Mr. Lockhart thinks it necessary to apologize for this new attempt on such a subject: but his readers, we believe, will readily acquit him; or, at worst, will censure only the performance of his task, not the choice of it. The character of Burns, indeed, is a theme that cannot easily become either trite or exhausted; and will probably gain rather than lose in its dimensions by the distance to which it is removed by Time. No man, it has been said, is a hero to his valet; and this is probably true; but the fault is at least as likely to be the valet's as the hero's. For it is certain, that to the vulgar eye few things are wonderful that are not distant. It is difficult for men to believe that the man, the mere man whom they see, nay perhaps painfully feel, toiling at their side through the poor jostlings of existence, can be made of finer clay than themselves. Suppose that some dining acquaintance of Sir Thomas Lucy's, and neighbor of John a Combe's, had snatched an hour or two from the preservation of his game, and written us a Life of Shakspeare! What dissertations should we not have had, — not on *Hamlet* and *The Tempest*, but on the wool-trade, and deer-stealing, and the libel and vagrant laws; and how the Poacher became a Player; and how Sir Thomas and Mr. John had Christian bowels, and did not push him to extremities! In like manner, we believe, with respect to Burns, that till the companions of his pilgrimage, the Honorable Excise Commissioners, and the Gentlemen of the Caledonian Hunt, and the Dumfries Aristocracy, and all the Squires and Earls, equally with the Ayr Writers, and the New and Old Light Clergy, whom he had to do with, shall have become invisible in the darkness of the Past, or visible only by light borrowed from *his* juxtaposition, it will be difficult to measure him by any true standard, or to estimate what he really was and did, in the eighteenth century, for his country and the world. It will be difficult, we say; but still a fair problem for literary historians; and repeated attempts will give us repeated approximations.

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[1] Edinburgh Review, No. 96.— *The Life of Robert Burns.* By J. G. Lockhart, LL.B. Edinburgh, 1828.

His former Biographers have done something, no doubt, but by no means a great deal, to assist us. Dr. Currie and Mr. Walker, the principal of these writers, have both, we think, mistaken one essentially important thing: Their own and the world's true relation to their author, and the style in which it became such men to think and to speak of such a man. Dr. Currie loved the poet truly; more perhaps than he avowed to his readers, or even to himself; yet he everywhere introduces him with a certain patronizing, apologetic air; as if the polite public might think it strange and half unwarrantable that he, a man of science, a scholar and gentleman, should do such honor to a rustic. In all this, however, we readily admit that his fault was not want of love, but weakness of faith; and regret that the first and kindest of all our poet's biographers should not have seen farther, or believed more boldly what he saw. Mr. Walker offends more deeply in the same kind: and both err alike in presenting us with a detached catalogue of his several supposed attributes, virtues and vices, instead of a delineation of the resulting character as a living unity. This, however, is not painting a portrait; but gauging the length and breadth of the several features, and jotting down their dimensions in arithmetical ciphers. Nay it is not so much as that: for we are yet to learn by what arts or instruments the mind *could* be so measured and gauged.

Mr. Lockhart, we are happy to say, has avoided both these errors. He uniformly treats Burns as the high and remarkable man the public voice has now pronounced him to be: and in delineating him, he has avoided the method of separate generalities, and rather sought for characteristic incidents, habits, actions, sayings; in a word, for aspects which exhibit the whole man, as he looked and lived among his fellows. The book accordingly, with all its deficiencies, gives more insight, we think, into the true character of Burns, than any prior biography: though, being written on the very popular and condensed scheme of an article for *Constable's Miscellany*, it has less depth than we could have wished and expected from a writer of such power; and contains rather more, and more multifarious quotations than belong of right to an original production. Indeed, Mr. Lockhart's own writing is generally so good, so clear, direct and nervous, that we seldom wish to see it making place for another man's. However, the spirit of the work is throughout candid, tolerant and anxiously conciliating; compliments and praises are liberally distributed, on all hands, to great and small; and, as Mr. Morris Birkbeck observes of the society in the backwoods of America, "the courtesies of polite life are never lost sight of for a moment."

But there are better things than these in the volume; and we can safely testify, not only that it is easily and pleasantly read a first time, but may even be without difficulty read again.

Nevertheless, we are far from thinking that the problem of Burns's Biography has yet been adequately solved. We do not allude so much to deficiency of facts or documents, — though of these we are still every day receiving some fresh accession, — as to the limited and imperfect application of them to the great end of Biography. Our notions upon this subject may perhaps appear extravagant; but if an individual is really of consequence enough to have his life and character recorded for public remembrance, we have always been of opinion that the public ought to be made acquainted with all the inward springs and relations of his character. How did the world and man's life, from his particular position, represent themselves to his mind? How did coexisting circumstances modify him from without; how did he modify these from within? With what endeavors and what efficacy rule over them; with what resistance and what suffering sink under them? In one word, what and how produced was the effect of society on him; what and how produced was his effect on society? He who should answer these questions, in regard to any individual, would, as we believe, furnish a model of perfection in Biography. Few individuals, indeed, can deserve such a study; and many *lives* will be written, and, for the gratification of innocent curiosity, ought to be written, and read and forgotten, which are not in this sense *biographies.* But Burns, if we mistake not, is one of these few individuals; and such a study, at least with such a result, he has not yet obtained. Our own contributions to it, we are aware, can be but scanty and feeble; but we offer them with good-will, and trust they may meet with acceptance from those they are intended for.

Burns first came upon the world as a prodigy; and was, in that character, entertained by it, in the usual fashion, with loud, vague, tumultuous wonder, speedily subsiding into censure and neglect; till his early and most mournful death again awakened an enthusiasm for him, which, especially as there was now nothing to be done, and much to be spoken, has prolonged itself even to our own time. It is true, the "nine days" have long since elapsed; and the very continuance of this clamor proves that Burns was no vulgar wonder. Accordingly, even in sober judgments, where, as years passed by, he has come to rest more and more exclusively on his own intrinsic merits, and may now be well-nigh shorn of that casual radiance, he appears not only as a true British poet, but as one of the most considerable British men of the eighteenth century. Let it not be objected that he did little. He did much, if we consider where and how. If the work performed was small, we must remember that he had his very materials to discover; for the metal he worked in lay hid under the desert moor, where no eye but his had guessed its existence; and we may almost say, that with his own hand he had to construct the tools for fashioning it. For he found himself in deepest obscurity, without help, without instruction, without model; or with models only of the meanest sort. An educated man stands, as it were, in the midst of a boundless arsenal and magazine, filled with all the weapons and engines which man's skill has been able to devise from the earliest time; and he works, accordingly, with a strength borrowed from all past ages. How different is *his* state who stands on the outside of that storehouse, and feels that its gates must be stormed, or remain forever shut against him! His means are the commonest and rudest; the mere work done is no measure of his strength. A dwarf behind his steam-engine may remove mountains; but no dwarf will hew them down with the pickaxe; and he must be a Titan that hurls them abroad with his arms.

It is in this last shape that Burns presents himself. Born in an age the most prosaic Britain had yet seen, and in a condition the most disadvantageous, where his mind, if it accomplished aught, must accomplish it under the pressure of continual bodily toil, nay of penury and desponding apprehension of the worst evils, and with no furtherance but such knowledge as dwells in a poor man's hut, and the rhymes of a Ferguson or Ramsay for his standard of beauty, he sinks not under all these impediments: through the fogs and darkness of that obscure region, his lynx eye discerns the true relations of the world and human life; he grows into intellectual strength, and trains himself into intellectual expertness. Impelled by the expansive movement of his own irrepressible soul, he struggles forward into the general view; and with haughty modesty lays down before us, as the fruit of his labor, a gift, which Time has now pronounced imperishable. Add to all this, that his darksome drudging childhood and youth was by far the kindliest era of his whole life; and that he died in his thirty-seventh year: and then ask, If it be strange that his poems are imperfect, and of small extent, or that his genius attained no mastery in its art? Alas, his Sun shone as through a tropical tornado; and the pale Shadow of Death eclipsed it at noon! Shrouded in such baleful vapors, the genius of Burns was never seen in clear azure splendor, enlightening the world: but some beams from it did, by fits, pierce through; and it tinted those clouds with rainbow and orient colors, into a glory and stern grandeur, which men silently gazed on with wonder and tears!

We are anxious not to exaggerate; for it is exposition rather than admiration that our readers require of us here; and yet to avoid some tendency to that side is no easy matter. We love Burns, and we pity him; and love and pity are prone to magnify. Criticism, it is sometimes thought, should be a cold business; we are not so sure of this; but, at all events, our concern with Burns is not exclusively that of critics. True and genial as his poetry must appear, it is not chiefly as a poet, but as a man, that he interests and affects us. He was often advised to write a tragedy: time and means were not lent him for this; but through life he enacted a tragedy, and one of the deepest. We question whether the world has since witnessed so utterly sad a scene; whether Napoleon himself, left to brawl with Sir Hudson Lowe, and perish on his rock, "amid the melancholy main," presented to the reflecting mind such a "spectacle of pity and fear" as did this intrinsically nobler, gentler and perhaps greater soul, wasting itself away in a hopeless struggle with base entanglements, which coiled closer and closer round him, till only death opened him an outlet. Conquerors are a class of men with whom, for most part, the world could well dispense; nor can the hard intellect, the unsympathizing loftiness and high but selfish enthusiasm of such persons inspire us in general with any affection; at best it may excite amazement; and their fall, like that of a pyramid, will be beheld with a certain sadness and awe. But a true Poet, a man in whose heart resides some effluence of Wisdom, some tone of the "Eternal Melodies," is the most precious gift that can be bestowed on a generation: we see in him a freer, purer development of whatever is noblest in ourselves; his life is a rich lesson to us; and we mourn his death as that of a benefactor who loved and taught us.

Such a gift had Nature, in her bounty, bestowed on us in Robert Burns; but with queenlike indifference she cast it from her hand, like a thing of no moment; and it was defaced and torn asunder, as an idle bauble, before we recognized it. To the ill-starred Burns was given the power of making man's life more venerable, but that of wisely guiding his own life was not given. Destiny, — for so in our ignorance we must speak, — his faults, the faults of others, proved too hard for him; and that spirit, which might have soared could it but have walked, soon sank to the dust, its glorious faculties trodden under foot in the blossom; and died, we may almost say, without ever having lived. And so kind and warm a soul; so full of inborn riches, of love to all living and lifeless things! How his heart flows out in sympathy over universal Nature; and in her bleakest provinces discerns a beauty and a meaning! The "Daisy" falls not unheeded under his ploughshare; nor the ruined nest of that "wee, cowering, timorous beastie," cast forth, after all its provident pains, to "thole the sleety dribble and cranreuch cauld." The "hoar visage" of Winter delights him; he dwells with a sad and oft-returning fondness in these scenes of solemn desolation; but the voice of the tempest becomes an anthem to his ears; he loves to walk in the sounding woods, for "it raises his thoughts to *Him that walketh on the wings of the wind.*" A true Poet-soul, for it needs but to be struck, and the sound it yields will be music! But observe him chiefly as he mingles with his brother men. What warm, all-comprehending fellow-feeling; what trustful, boundless love; what generous exaggeration of the object loved! His rustic friend, his nut-brown maiden, are no longer mean and homely, but a hero and a queen, whom he prizes as the paragons of Earth. The rough scenes of Scottish life, not seen by him in any Arcadian illusion, but in the rude contradiction, in the smoke and soil of a too harsh reality, are still lovely to him: Poverty is indeed his companion, but Love also, and Courage; the simple feelings, the worth, the nobleness, that dwell under the straw roof, are dear and venerable to his heart: and thus over the lowest provinces of man's existence he pours the glory of his own soul; and they rise, in shadow and sunshine, softened and brightened into a beauty which other eyes discern not in the highest. He has a just self-consciousness, which too often degenerates into pride; yet it is a noble pride, for defence, not for offence; no cold suspicious feeling, but a frank and social one. The Peasant Poet bears himself, we might say, like a King in exile: he is cast among the low, and feels himself equal to the highest; yet he claims no rank, that none may be disputed to him. The forward he can repel, the supercilious he can subdue; pretensions of wealth or ancestry are of no avail with him; there is a fire in that dark eye, under which the "insolence of condescension" cannot thrive. In his abasement, in his extreme need, he forgets not for a moment the majesty of Poetry and Manhood. And yet, far as he feels himself above common men, he wanders not apart from them, but mixes warmly in their interests; nay throws himself into their arms, and, as it were, entreats them to love him. It is moving to see how, in his darkest despondency, this proud being still seeks relief from friendship; unbosoms himself, often to the unworthy; and, amid tears, strains to his glowing heart a heart that knows only the name of friendship. And yet he was "quick to learn;" a man of keen vision, before whom common disguises afforded no concealment. His understanding saw through the hollowness even of accomplished deceivers; but there was a generous credulity in his heart. And so did our Peasant show himself among us; "a soul like an Æolian harp, in whose strings the vulgar wind, as it passed through them, changed itself into articulate melody." And this was he for whom the world found no fitter business than quarrelling with smugglers and vintners, computing excise-dues upon tallow, and gauging ale-barrels! In such toils was that mighty Spirit sorrowfully wasted: and a hundred years may pass on, before another such is given us to waste.

All that remains of Burns, the Writings he has left, seem to us, as we hinted above, no more than a poor mutilated fraction of what was in him; brief, broken glimpses of a genius that could never show itself complete; that wanted all things for completeness: culture, leisure, true effort, nay even length of life. His poems are, with scarcely any exception, mere occasional effusions; poured forth with little premeditation; expressing, by such means as offered, the passion, opinion, or humor of the hour. Never in one instance was it permitted him to grapple with any subject with the full collection of his strength, to fuse and mould it in the concentrated fire of his genius. To try by the strict rules of Art such imperfect fragments, would be at once unprofitable and unfair. Nevertheless, there is something in these poems, marred and defective as they are, which forbids the most fastidious student of poetry to pass them by. Some sort of enduring quality they must have: for after fifty years of the wildest vicissitudes in poetic taste, they still continue to be read; nay, are read more and more eagerly, more and more extensively; and this not only by literary virtuosos, and that class upon whom transitory causes operate most strongly, but by all classes, down to the most hard, unlettered and truly natural class, who read little, and especially no poetry, except because they find pleasure in it. The grounds of so singular and wide a popularity, which extends, in a literal sense, from the palace to the hut, and over all regions where the English tongue is spoken, are well worth inquiring into. After every just deduction, it seems to imply some rare excellence in these works. What is that excellence?

To answer this question will not lead us far. The excellence of Burns is, indeed, among the rarest, whether in poetry or prose; but, at the same time, it is plain and easily recognized: his *Sincerity*, his indisputable air of Truth. Here are no fabulous woes or joys; no hollow fantastic sentimentalities; no wire-drawn refinings, either in thought or feeling: the passion that is traced before us has glowed in a living heart; the opinion he utters has risen in his own understanding, and been a light to his own steps. He does not write from hearsay, but from sight and experience; it is the scenes that he has lived and labored amidst, that he describes: those scenes, rude and humble as they are, have kindled beautiful emotions in his soul, noble thoughts, and definite resolves; and he speaks forth what is in him, not from any outward call of vanity or interest, but because his heart is too full to be silent. He speaks it with such melody and modulation as he can; "in homely rustic jingle;" but it is his own, and genuine. This is the grand secret for finding readers and retaining them: let him who would move and convince others, be first moved and convinced himself. Horace's rule, *Si vis me flere*, is applicable in a wider sense than the literal one. To every poet, to every writer, we might say: Be true, if you would be believed. Let a man but speak forth with genuine earnestness the thought, the emotion, the actual condition of his own heart; and other men, so strangely are we all knit together by the tie of sympathy, must and will give heed to him. In culture, in extent of view, we may stand above the speaker, or below him; but in either case, his words, if they are earnest and sincere, will find some response within us; for in spite of all casual varieties in outward rank or inward, as face answers to face, so does the heart of man to man.

This may appear a very simple principle, and one which Burns had little merit in discovering. True, the discovery is easy enough: but the practical appliance is not easy; is indeed the fundamental difficulty which all poets have to strive with, and which scarcely one in the hundred ever fairly surmounts. A head too dull to discriminate the true from the false; a heart too dull to love the one at all risks, and to hate the other in spite of all temptations, are alike fatal to a writer. With either, or, as more commonly happens, with both of these deficiencies combine a love of distinction, a wish to be original, which is seldom wanting, and we have Affectation, the bane of literature, as Cant, its elder brother, is of morals. How often does the one and the other front us, in poetry, as in life! Great poets themselves are not always free of this vice; nay, it is precisely on a certain sort and degree of greatness that it is most commonly ingrafted. A strong effort after excellence will sometimes solace itself with a mere shadow of success; he who has much to unfold, will sometimes unfold it imperfectly. Byron, for instance, was no common man: yet if we examine his poetry with this view, we shall find it far enough from faultless. Generally speaking, we should say that it is not true. He refreshes us, not with the divine fountain, but too often with vulgar strong waters, stimulating indeed to the taste, but soon ending in dislike, or even nausea. Are his Harolds and Giaours, we would ask, real men; we mean, poetically consistent and conceivable men? Do not these characters, does not the character of their author, which more or less shines through them all, rather appear a thing put on for the occasion; no natural or possible mode of being, but something intended to look much grander than nature? Surely, all these stormful agonies, this volcanic heroism, superhuman contempt and moody desperation, with so much scowling, and teeth-gnashing, and other sulphurous humor, is more like the brawling of a player in some paltry tragedy, which is to last three hours, than the bearing of a man in the business of life, which is to last threescore and ten years. To our minds there is a taint of this sort, something which we should call theatrical, false, affected, in every one of these otherwise so powerful pieces. Perhaps *Don Juan*, especially the latter parts of it, is the only thing approaching to a *sincere* work, he ever wrote; the only work where he showed himself, in any measure, as he was; and seemed so intent on his subject as, for moments, to forget himself. Yet Byron hated this vice; we believe, heartily detested it: nay he had declared formal war against it in words. So difficult is it even for the strongest to make this primary attainment, which might seem the simplest of all: to *read its own consciousness without mistakes,* without errors involuntary or wilful! We recollect no poet of Burns's susceptibility who comes before us from the first, and abides with us to the last, with such a total want of affectation. He is an honest man, and an honest writer. In his successes and his failures, in his greatness and his littleness, he is ever clear, simple, true, and glitters with no lustre but his own. We reckon this to be a great virtue; to be, in fact, the root of most other virtues, literary as well as moral.

Here, however, let us say, it is to the Poetry of Burns that we now allude; to those writings which he had time to meditate, and where no special reason existed to warp his critical feeling, or obstruct his endeavor to fulfil it. Certain of his Letters, and other fractions of prose composition, by no means deserve this praise. Here, doubtless, there is not the same natural truth of style; but on the contrary, something not only stiff, but strained and twisted; a certain high-flown inflated tone; the stilting emphasis of which contrasts ill with the firmness and rugged simplicity of even his poorest verses. Thus no man, it would appear, is altogether unaffected. Does not Shakspeare himself sometimes premeditate the sheerest bombast! But even with regard to these Letters of Burns, it is but fair to state that he had two excuses. The first was his comparative deficiency in language. Burns, though for most part he writes with singular force and even gracefulness, is not master of English prose, as he is of Scottish verse; not master of it, we mean, in proportion to the depth and vehemence of his matter. These Letters strike us as the effort of a man to express something which he has no organ fit for expressing. But a second and weightier excuse is to be found in the peculiarity of Burns's social rank. His correspondents are often men whose relation to him he has never accurately ascertained; whom therefore he is either forearming himself against, or else unconsciously flattering, by adopting the style he thinks will please them. At all events, we should remember that these faults, even in his Letters, are not the rule, but the exception. Whenever he writes, as one would ever wish to do, to trusted friends and on real interests, his style becomes simple, vigorous, expressive, sometimes even beautiful. His letters to Mrs. Dunlop are uniformly excellent.

But we return to his Poetry. In addition to its Sincerity, it has another peculiar merit, which indeed is but a mode, or perhaps a means, of the foregoing: this displays itself in his choice of subjects; or rather in his indifference as to subjects, and the power he has of making all subjects interesting. The ordinary poet, like the ordinary man, is forever seeking in external circumstances the help which can be found only in himself. In what is familiar and near at hand, he discerns no form or comeliness: home is not poetical but prosaic; it is in some past, distant, conventional heroic world, that poetry resides; were he there and not here, were he thus and not so, it would be well with him. Hence our innumerable host of rose-colored Novels and iron-mailed Epics, with their locality not on the Earth, but somewhere nearer to the Moon. Hence our Virgins of the Sun, and our Knights of the Cross, malicious Saracens in turbans, and copper-colored Chiefs in wampum, and so many other truculent figures from the heroic times or the heroic climates, who on all hands swarm in our poetry. Peace be with them! But yet, as a great moralist proposed preaching to the men of this century, so would we fain preach to the poets, "a sermon on the duty of staying at home." Let them be sure that heroic ages and heroic climates can do little for them. That form of life has attraction for us, less because it is better or nobler than our own, than simply because it is different; and even this attraction must be of the most transient sort. For will not our own age, one day, be an ancient one; and have as quaint a costume as the rest; not contrasted with the rest, therefore, but ranked along with them, in respect of quaintness? Does Homer interest us now, because he wrote of what passed beyond his native Greece, and two centuries before he was born; or because he wrote what passed in God's world, and in the heart of man, which is the same after thirty centuries? Let our poets look to this: is their feeling really finer, truer, and their vision deeper than that of other men, — they have nothing to fear, even from the humblest subject; is it not so, — they have nothing to hope, but an ephemeral favor, even from the highest.

The poet, we imagine, can never have far to seek for a subject: the elements of his art are in him, and around him on every hand; for him the Ideal world is not remote from the Actual, but under it and within it: nay, he is a poet, precisely because he can discern it there. Wherever there is a sky above him, and a world around him, the poet is in his place; for here too is man's existence, with its infinite longings and small acquirings; its ever-thwarted, ever-renewed endeavors; its unspeakable aspirations, its fears and hopes that wander through Eternity; and all the mystery of brightness and of gloom that it was ever made of, in any age or climate, since man first began to live. Is there not the fifth act of a Tragedy in every death-bed, though it were a peasant's, and a bed of heath? And are wooings and weddings obsolete, that there can be Comedy no longer? Or are men suddenly grown wise, that Laughter must no longer shake his sides, but be cheated of his Farce? Man's life and nature is, as it was, and as it will ever be. But the poet must have an eye to read these things, and a heart to understand them; or they come and pass away before him in vain. He is a *vates*, a seer; a gift of vision has been given him. Has life no meanings for him, which another cannot equally decipher; then he is no poet, and Delphi itself will not make him one.

In this respect, Burns, though not perhaps absolutely a great poet, better manifests his capability, better proves the truth of his genius, than if he had by his own strength kept the whole Minerva Press going, to the end of his literary course. He shows himself at least a poet of Nature's own making; and Nature, after all, is still the grand agent in making poets. We often hear of this and the other external condition being requisite for the existence of a poet. Sometimes it is a certain sort of training; he must have studied certain things, studied for instance "the elder dramatists," and so learned a poetic language; as if poetry lay in the tongue, not in the heart. At other times we are told he must be bred in a certain rank, and must be on a confidential footing with the higher classes; because, above all things, he must see the world. As to seeing the world, we apprehend this will cause him little difficulty, if he have but eyesight to see it with. Without eyesight, indeed, the task might be hard. The blind or the purblind man "travels from Dan to Beersheba, and finds it all barren." But happily every poet is born *in* the world; and sees it, with or against his will, every day and every hour he lives. The mysterious workmanship of man's heart, the true light and the inscrutable darkness of man's destiny, reveal themselves not only in capital cities and crowded saloons, but in every hut and hamlet where men have their abode. Nay, do not the elements of all human virtues and all human vices; the passions at once of a Borgia and of a Luther, lie written, in stronger or fainter lines, in the consciousness of every individual bosom, that has practised honest self-examination? Truly, this same world may be seen in Mossgiel and Tarbolton, if we look well, as clearly as it ever came to light in Crockford's, or the Tuileries itself.

But sometimes still harder requisitions are laid on the poor aspirant to poetry; for it is hinted that he should have *been born* two centuries ago; inasmuch as poetry, about that date, vanished from the earth, and became no longer attainable by men! Such cobweb speculations have, now and then, overhung the field of literature; but they obstruct not the growth of any plant there: the Shakspeare or the Burns, unconsciously and merely as he walks onward, silently brushes them away. Is not every genius an impossibility till he appear? Why do we call him new and original, if *we* saw where his marble was lying, and what fabric he could rear from it? It is not the material but the workman that is wanting. It is not the dark *place* that hinders, but the dim *eye*. A Scottish peasant's life was the meanest and rudest of all lives, till Burns became a poet in it, and a poet of it;

found it a *man's* life, and therefore significant to men. A thousand battle-fields remain unsung; but the *Wounded Hare* has not perished without its memorial; a balm of mercy yet breathes on us from its dumb agonies, because a poet was there. Our *Halloween* had passed and repassed, in rude awe and laughter, since the era of the Druids; but no Theocritus, till Burns, discerned in it the materials of a Scottish Idyl: neither was the *Holy Fair* any *Council of Trent* or Roman *Jubilee;* but nevertheless, *Superstition* and *Hypocrisy* and *Fun* having been propitious to him, in this man's hand it became a poem, instinct with satire and genuine comic life. [Let but the true poet be given us, we repeat it, place him where and how you will, and true poetry will not be wanting.]

Independently of the essential gift of poetic feeling, as we have now attempted to describe it, a certain rugged sterling worth pervades whatever Burns has written; a virtue, as of green fields and mountain breezes, dwells in his poetry; it is redolent of natural life and hardy natural men. There is a decisive strength in him, and yet a sweet native gracefulness: he is tender, he is vehement, yet without constraint or too visible effort; he melts the heart, or inflames it, with a power which seems habitual and familiar to him. We see that in this man there was the gentleness, the trembling pity of a woman, with the deep earnestness, the force and passionate ardor of a hero. [Tears lie in him, and consuming fire; as lightning lurks in the drops of the summer cloud.] He has a resonance in his bosom for every note of human feeling; the high and the low, the sad, the ludicrous, the joyful, are welcome in their turns to his "lightly moved and all-conceiving spirit." And observe with what a fierce prompt force he grasps his subject, be it what it may! How he fixes, as it were, the full image of the matter in his eye; full and clear in every lineament; and catches the real type and essence of it, amid a thousand accidents and superficial circumstances, no one of which misleads him! Is it of reason; some truth to be discovered? No sophistry, no vain surface-logic detains him; quick, resolute, unerring, he pierces through into the marrow of the question; and speaks his verdict with an emphasis that cannot be forgotten. Is it of description; some visual object to be represented? No poet of any age or nation is more graphic than Burns: the characteristic features disclose themselves to him at a glance; three lines from his hand, and we have a likeness. And, in that rough dialect, in that rude, often awkward metre, so clear and definite a likeness! It seems a draughtsman working with a burnt stick; and yet the burin of a Retzsch is not more expressive or exact.

Of this last excellence, the plainest and most comprehensive of all, being indeed the root and foundation of *every* sort of talent, poetical or intellectual, we could produce innumerable instances from the writings of Burns. Take these glimpses of a snow-storm from his *Winter Night* (the italics are ours): —

"When biting Boreas, fell and doure,
Sharp shivers thro' the leafless bow'r,
And Phœbus *gies a short-liv'd glowr*
Far south the lift,
Dim-dark'ning thro' the flaky show'r
Or whirling drift:

"Ae night the storm the steeples rock'd,
Poor labor sweet in sleep was lock'd,
While burns *wi' snawy wreeths upchok'd*
Wild-eddying swhirl,
Or thro' the mining outlet bock'd
Down headlong hurl."

Are there not "descriptive touches" here? The describer *saw* this thing; the essential feature and true likeness of every circumstance in it; saw, and not with the eye only. "Poor labor locked in sweet sleep;" the dead stillness of man, unconscious, vanquished, yet not unprotected, while such strife of the material elements rages, and seems to reign supreme in loneliness: this is of the heart as well as of the eye! — Look also at his image of a thaw, and prophesied fall of the *Auld Brig:* —

"When heavy, dark, continued, a'-day rains
Wi' deepening deluges o'erflow the plains;

When from the hills where springs the brawling Coil,
Or stately Lugar's *mossy* fountains *boil,*
Or where the Greenock winds his *moorland* course,
Or haunted Garpal[1] draws his feeble source,
Arous'd by blust'ring winds and *spotting* thowes,
In mony a torrent down his snaw-broo rowes ;
While crashing ice, borne on the roaring speat,
Sweeps dams and mills and brigs a' to the gate ;
And from Glenbuck down to the Rottonkey,
Auld Ayr is just one lengthen'd *tumbling* sea;
Then down ye 'll hurl, Deil nor ye never rise !
And *dash the gumlie jaups up to the pouring skies.*"

The last line is in itself a Poussin-picture of that Deluge ! The welkin has, as it were, bent down with its weight ; the "gumlie jaups" and the "pouring skies" are mingled together ; it is a world of rain and ruin. — In respect of mere clearness and minute fidelity, the *Farmer's* commendation of his *Auld Mare,* in plough or in cart, may vie with Homer's Smithy of the Cyclops, or yoking of Priam's Chariot. Nor have we forgotten stout *Burn-the-wind* and his brawny customers, inspired by *Scotch Drink:* but it is needless to multiply examples. One other trait of a much finer sort we select from multitudes of such among his *Songs.* It gives, in a single line, to the saddest feeling the saddest environment and local habitation :

"*The pale Moon is setting beyond the white wave,*
And Time is setting wi' me, O ;
Farewell, false friends ! false lover, farewell !
I 'll nae mair trouble them nor thee, O."

This clearness of sight we have called the foundation of all talent ; for in fact, unless we *see* our object, how shall we know how to place or prize it, in our understanding, our imagination, our affections ? Yet it is not in itself, perhaps, a very high excellence ; but capable of being united indifferently with the strongest, or with ordinary powers. Homer surpasses all men in this quality : but strangely enough, at no great distance below him are Richardson and Defoe. It belongs, in truth, to what is called a lively mind; and gives no sure indication of the higher endowments that may exist along with it. In all the three cases we have mentioned, it is combined with great garrulity; their descriptions are detailed, ample and lovingly exact; Homer's fire bursts through, from time to time, as if by accident; but Defoe and Richardson have no fire. Burns, again, is not more distinguished by the clearness than by the impetuous force of his conceptions. Of the strength, the piercing emphasis with which he thought, his emphasis of expression may give a humble but the readiest proof. Who ever uttered sharper sayings than his; words more memorable, now by their burning vehemence, now by their cool vigor and laconic pith? A single phrase depicts a whole subject, a whole scene. We hear of "a gentleman that derived his patent of nobility direct from Almighty God." Our Scottish forefathers in the battle-field struggled forward "*red-wat-shod:*" in this one word, a full vision of horror and carnage, perhaps too frightfully accurate for Art!

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[1] *Fabulosus* Hydaspes !

In fact, one of the leading features in the mind of Burns is this vigor of his strictly intellectual perceptions. A resolute force is ever visible in his judgments, and in his feelings and volitions. Professor Stewart says of him, with some surprise: "All the faculties of Burns's mind were, as far as I could judge, equally vigorous; and his predilection for poetry was rather the result of his own enthusiastic and impassioned temper, than of a genius exclusively adapted to that species of composition. From his conversation I should have pronounced him to be fitted to excel in whatever walk of ambition he had chosen to exert his abilities." But this, if we mistake not, is at all times the very essence of a truly poetical endowment. Poetry, except in such cases as that of Keats, where the whole consists in a weak-eyed maudlin sensibility, and a certain vague random tunefulness of nature, is no separate faculty, no organ which can be superadded to the rest, or disjoined from them; but rather the result of their general harmony and completion. The feelings, the gifts that exist in the Poet are those that exist, with more or less development, in every human soul: the imagination, which shudders at the Hell of

Dante, is the same faculty, weaker in degree, which called that picture into being. How does the Poet speak to men, with power, but by being still more a man than they? Shakspeare, it has been well observed, in the planning and completing of his tragedies, has shown an Understanding, were it nothing more, which might have governed states, or indited a *Novum Organum.* What Burns's force of understanding may have been, we have less means of judging: it had to dwell among the humblest objects; never saw Philosophy; never rose, except by natural effort and for short intervals, into the region of great ideas. Nevertheless, sufficient indication, if no proof sufficient, remains for us in his works: we discern the brawny movements of a gigantic though untutored strength; and can understand how, in conversation, his quick sure insight into men and things may, as much as aught else about him, have amazed the best thinkers of his time and country.

But, unless we mistake, the intellectual gift of Burns is fine as well as strong. The more delicate relations of things could not well have escaped his eye, for they were intimately present to his heart. The logic of the senate and the forum is indispensable, but not all-sufficient; nay perhaps the highest Truth is that which will the most certainly elude it. For this logic works by words, and "the highest," it has been said, "cannot be expressed in words." We are not without tokens of an openness for this higher truth also, of a keen though uncultivated sense for it, having existed in Burns. Mr. Stewart, it will be remembered, "wonders," in the passage above quoted, that Burns had formed some distinct conception of the "doctrine of association." We rather think that far subtler things than the doctrine of association had from of old been familiar to him. Here for instance: —

"We know nothing," thus writes he, "or next to nothing, of the structure of our souls, so we cannot account for those seeming caprices in them, that one should be particularly pleased with this thing, or struck with that, which, on minds of a different cast, makes no extraordinary impression. I have some favorite flowers in spring, among which are the mountain-daisy, the harebell, the foxglove, the wild-brier rose, the budding birch, and the hoary hawthorn, that I view and hang over with particular delight. I never hear the loud solitary whistle of the curlew in a summer noon, or the wild mixing cadence of a troop of gray plover in an autumnal morning, without feeling an elevation of soul like the enthusiasm of devotion or poetry. Tell me, my dear friend, to what can this be owing? Are we a piece of machinery, which, like the Æolian harp, passive, takes the impression of the passing accident; or do these workings argue something within us above the trodden clod? I own myself partial to such proofs of those awful and important realities: a God that made all things, man's immaterial and immortal nature, and a world of weal or woe beyond death and the grave."

Force and fineness of understanding are often spoken of as something different from general force and fineness of nature, as something partly independent of them. The necessities of language so require it; but in truth these qualities are not distinct and independent: except in special cases, and from special causes, they ever go together. A man of strong understanding is generally a man of strong character; neither is delicacy in the one kind often divided from delicacy in the other. No one, at all events, is ignorant that in the Poetry of Burns keenness of insight keeps pace with keenness of feeling; that his *light* is not more pervading than his *warmth*. He is a man of the most impassioned temper; with passions not strong only, but noble, and of the sort in which great virtues and great poems take their rise. It is reverence, it is love towards all Nature that inspires him, that opens his eyes to its beauty, and makes heart and voice eloquent in its praise. There is a true old saying, that "Love furthers knowledge:" but above all, it is the living essence of that knowledge which makes poets; the first principle of its existence, increase, activity. Of Burns's fervid affection, his generous all-embracing Love, we have spoken already, as of the grand distinction of his nature, seen equally in word and deed, in his Life and in his Writings. It were easy to multiply examples. Not man only, but all that environs man in the material and moral universe, is lovely in his sight: "the hoary hawthorn," the "troop of gray plover," the "solitary curlew," all are dear to him; all live in this Earth along with him, and to all he is knit as in mysterious brotherhood. How touching is it, for instance, that, amidst the gloom of personal misery, brooding over the wintry desolation without him and within him, he thinks of the "ourie cattle" and "silly sheep," and their sufferings in the pitiless storm!

"I thought me on the ourie cattle,
Or silly sheep, wha bide this brattle
O' wintry war,
Or thro' the drift, deep-lairing, sprattle,
Beneath a scaur.
Ilk happing bird, wee helpless thing,
That in the merry months o' spring
Delighted me to hear thee sing,
What comes o' thee?
Where wilt thou cow'r thy chittering wing,
And close thy ee?"

The tenant of the mean hut, with its "ragged roof and chinky wall," has a heart to pity even these! This is worth several homilies on Mercy; for it is the voice of Mercy herself. Burns, indeed, lives in sympathy; his soul rushes forth into all realms of being; nothing that has existence can be indifferent to him. The very Devil he cannot hate with right orthodoxy:—

"But fare you weel, auld Nickie-ben;
O, wad ye tak a thought and men'!
Ye aiblins might,—I dinna ken,—
Still hae a stake;
I'm wae to think upo' yon den,
Even for your sake!"

"*He* is the father of curses and lies," said Dr. Slop; "and is cursed and damned already."—"I am sorry for it," quoth my uncle Toby!—A Poet without Love were a physical and metaphysical impossibility.

But has it not been said, in contradiction to this principle, that "Indignation makes verses"? It has been so said, and is true enough: but the contradiction is apparent, not real. The Indignation which makes verses is, properly speaking, an inverted Love; the love of some right, some worth, some goodness, belonging to ourselves or others, which has been injured, and which this tempestuous feeling issues forth to defend and avenge. No selfish fury of heart, existing there as a primary feeling, and without its opposite, ever produced much Poetry: otherwise, we suppose, the Tiger were the most musical of all our choristers. Johnson said, he loved a good hater; by which he must have meant, not so much one that hated violently, as one that hated wisely; hated baseness from love of nobleness. However, in spite of Johnson's paradox, tolerable enough for once in speech, but which need not have been so often adopted in print since then, we rather believe that good men deal sparingly in hatred, either wise or unwise: nay that a "good" hater is still a desideratum in this world. The Devil, at least, who passes for the chief and best of that class, is said to be nowise an amiable character.

Of the verses which Indignation makes, Burns has also given us specimens: and among the best that were ever given. Who will forget his "*Dweller in yon Dungeon dark;*" a piece that might have been chanted by the Furies of Æschylus? The secrets of the infernal Pit are laid bare; a boundless baleful "darkness visible;" and streaks of hell-fire quivering madly in its black haggard bosom! —

> "Dweller in yon Dungeon dark,
> Hangman of Creation, mark!
> Who in widow's weeds appears,
> Laden with unhonored years,
> Noosing with care a bursting purse,
> Baited with many a deadly curse!"

Why should we speak of *Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled;* since all know of it, from the king to the meanest of his subjects? This dithyrambic was composed on horseback; in riding in the middle of tempests, over the wildest Galloway moor, in company with a Mr. Syme, who, observing the poet's looks, forbore to speak, — judiciously enough, for a man composing *Bruce's Address* might be unsafe to trifle with. Doubtless this stern hymn was singing itself, as he formed it, through the soul of Burns: but to the external ear, it should be sung with the throat of the whirlwind. So long as there is warm blood in the heart of Scotchman or man, it will move in fierce thrills under this war-ode; the best, we believe, that was ever written by any pen.

Another wild stormful Song, that dwells in our ear and mind with a strange tenacity, is *Macpherson's Farewell.* Perhaps there is something in the tradition itself that co-operates. For was not this grim Celt, this shaggy Northland Cacus, that "lived a life of sturt and strife, and died by treacherie," — was not he too one of the Nimrods and Napoleons of the earth, in the arena of his own remote misty glens, for want of a clearer and wider one? Nay, was there not a touch of grace given him? A fibre of love and softness, of poetry itself, must have lived in his savage heart: for he composed that air the night before his execution; on the wings of that poor melody his better soul would soar away above oblivion, pain and all the ignominy and despair, which, like an avalanche, was hurling him to the abyss! Here also, as at Thebes, and in Pelops' line, was material Fate matched against man's Freewill; matched in bitterest though obscure duel; and the ethereal soul sank not, even in its blindness, without a cry which has survived it. But who, except Burns, could have given words to such a soul; words that we never listen to without a strange half-barbarous, half-poetic fellow-feeling?

"Sae rantingly, sae wantonly,
Sae dauntingly gaed he;
He play'd a spring, and danced it round,
Below the gallows-tree."

Under a lighter disguise, the same principle of Love, which we have recognized as the great characteristic of Burns, and of all true poets, occasionally manifests itself in the shape of Humor. Everywhere, indeed, in his sunny moods, a full buoyant flood of mirth rolls through the mind of Burns; he rises to the high, and stoops to the low, and is brother and playmate to all Nature. We speak not of his bold and often irresistible faculty of caricature; for this is Drollery rather than Humor: but a much tenderer sportfulness dwells in him, and comes forth here and there, in evanescent and beautiful touches; as in his *Address to the Mouse*, or the *Farmer's Mare*, or in his *Elegy on poor Mailie*, which last may be reckoned his happiest effort of this kind. In these pieces there are traits of a Humor as fine as that of Sterne; yet altogether different, original, peculiar, — the Humor of Burns.

Of the tenderness, the playful pathos, and many other kindred qualities of Burns's Poetry, much more might be said; but now, with these poor outlines of a sketch, we must prepare to quit this part of our subject. To speak of his individual Writings, adequately and with any detail, would lead us far beyond our limits. As already hinted, we can look on but few of these pieces as, in strict critical language, deserving the name of Poems: they are rhymed eloquence, rhymed pathos, rhymed sense; yet seldom essentially melodious, aerial, poetical. *Tam o' Shanter* itself, which enjoys so high a favor, does not appear to us at all decisively to come under this last category. It is not so much a poem, as a piece of sparkling rhetoric; the heart and body of the story still lies hard and dead. He has not gone back, much less carried us back, into that dark, earnest, wondering age, when the tradition was believed, and when it took its rise; he does not attempt, by any new-modelling of his supernatural ware, to strike anew that deep mysterious chord of human nature, which once responded to such things; and which lives in us too, and will forever live, though silent now, or vibrating with far other notes, and to far different issues. Our German readers will understand us, when we say, that he is not the Tieck but the Musäus of this tale. Externally it is all green and living; yet look closer, it is no firm growth, but only ivy on a rock. The piece does not properly cohere: the strange chasm which yawns in our incredulous imaginations between the Ayr public-house and the gate of Tophet, is nowhere bridged over, nay the idea of such a bridge is laughed at; and thus the Tragedy of the adventure becomes a mere drunken phantasmagoria, or many-colored spectrum painted on ale-vapors, and the Farce alone has any reality. We do not say that Burns should have made much more of this tradition; we rather think that, for strictly poetical purposes, not much *was* to be made of it. Neither are we blind to the deep, varied, genial power displayed in what he has actually accomplished; but we find far more "Shakspearean" qualities, as these of *Tam o' Shanter* have been fondly named, in many of his other pieces; nay we incline to believe that this latter might have been written, all but quite as well, by a man who, in place of genius, had only possessed talent.

Perhaps we may venture to say, that the most strictly poetical of all his "poems" is one which does not appear in Currie's Edition; but has been often printed before and since, under the humble title of *The Jolly Beggars.* The subject truly is among the lowest in Nature; but it only the more shows our Poet's gift in raising it into the domain of Art. To our minds, this piece seems thoroughly compacted; melted together, refined; and poured forth in one flood of true *liquid* harmony. It is light, airy, soft of movement; yet sharp and precise in its details; every face is a portrait: that *raucle carlin,* that *wee Apollo,* that *Son of Mars,* are Scottish, yet ideal; the scene is at once a dream, and the very Ragcastle of "Poosie-Nansie." Farther, it seems in a considerable degree complete, a real self-supporting Whole, which is the highest merit in a poem. The blanket of the Night is drawn asunder for a moment; in full, ruddy, flaming light, these rough tatterdemalions are seen in their boisterous revel; for the strong pulse of Life vindicates its right to gladness even here; and when the curtain closes, we prolong the action, without effort; the next day as the last, our *Caird* and our *Balladmonger* are singing and soldiering; their "brats and callets" are hawking, begging, cheating; and some other night, in new combinations, they will wring from Fate another hour of wassail and good cheer. Apart from the universal sympathy with man which this again bespeaks in Burns, a genuine inspiration and no inconsiderable technical talent are manifested here. There is the fidelity, humor, warm life and accurate painting and grouping of some Teniers, for whom hostlers and carousing peasants are not without significance. It would be strange, doubtless, to call this the best of Burns's writings: we mean to say only, that it seems to us the most perfect of its kind, as a piece of poetical composition, strictly so called. In the *Beggars' Opera*, in the *Beggars' Bush*, as other critics have already remarked, there is nothing which, in real poetic vigor, equals this *Cantata;* nothing, as we think, which comes within many degrees of it.

But by far the most finished, complete and truly inspired pieces of Burns are, without dispute, to be found among his *Songs.* It is here that, although through a small aperture, his light shines with least obstruction; in its highest beauty and pure sunny clearness. The reason may be, that Song is a brief simple species of composition; and requires nothing so much for its perfection as genuine poetic feeling, genuine music of heart. Yet the Song has its rules equally with the Tragedy; rules which in most cases are poorly fulfilled, in many cases are not so much as felt. We might write a long essay on the Songs of Burns; which we reckon by far the best that Britain has yet produced: for indeed, since the era of Queen Elizabeth, we know not that, by any other hand, aught truly worth attention has been accomplished in this department. True, we have songs enough "by persons of quality;" we have tawdry, hollow, wine-bred madrigals; many a rhymed speech "in the flowing and watery vein of Ossorius the Portugal Bishop," rich in sonorous words, and, for moral, dashed perhaps with some tint of a sentimental sensuality; all which many persons cease not from endeavoring to sing; though for most part, we fear, the music is but from the throat outwards, or at best from some region far enough short of the *Soul;* not in which, but in a certain inane Limbo of the Fancy, or even in some vaporous debatable-land on the outskirts of the Nervous System, most of such madrigals and rhymed speeches seem to have originated.

With the Songs of Burns we must not name these things. Independently of the clear, manly, heartfelt sentiment that ever pervades *his* poetry, his Songs are honest in another point of view: in form, as well as in spirit. They do not *affect* to be set to music, but they actually and in themselves are music; they have received their life, and fashioned themselves together, in the medium of Harmony, as Venus rose from the bosom of the sea. The story, the feeling, is not detailed, but suggested; not *said,* or spouted, in rhetorical completeness and coherence; but *sung,* in fitful gushes, in glowing hints, in fantastic breaks, in *warblings* not of the voice only, but of the whole mind. We consider this to be the essence of a song; and that no songs since the little careless catches, and as it were drops of song, which Shakspeare has here and there sprinkled over his Plays, fulfil this condition in nearly the same degree as most of Burns's do. Such grace and truth of external movement, too, presupposes in general a corresponding force and truth of sentiment and inward meaning. The Songs of Burns are not more perfect in the former quality than in the latter. With what tenderness he sings, yet with what vehemence and entireness! There is a piercing wail in his sorrow, the purest rapture in his joy; he burns with the sternest ire, or laughs with the loudest or slyest mirth; and yet he is sweet and soft, "sweet as the smile when fond lovers meet, and soft as their parting tear." If we farther take into account the immense variety of his subjects; how, from the loud flowing revel in *Willie brew'd a Peck o' Maut,* to the still, rapt enthusiasm of sadness for *Mary in Heaven;* from the glad kind greeting of *Auld Lang Syne,* or the comic archness of *Duncan Gray,* to the fire-eyed fury of *Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled,* he has found a tone and words for every mood of man's heart, — it will seem a small praise if we rank him as the first of all our Song-writers; for we know not where to find one worthy of being second to him.

It is on his Songs, as we believe, that Burns's chief influence as an author will ultimately be found to depend: nor, if our Fletcher's aphorism is true, shall we account this a small influence. "Let me make the songs of a people," said he, "and you shall make its laws." Surely, if ever any Poet might have equalled himself with Legislators on this ground, it was

Burns. His Songs are already part of the mother-tongue, not of Scotland only but of Britain, and of the millions that in all ends of the earth speak a British language. In hut and hall, as the heart unfolds itself in many-colored joy and woe of existence, the *name*, the *voice* of that joy and that woe, is the name and voice which Burns has given them. Strictly speaking, perhaps no British man has so deeply affected the thoughts and feelings of so many men, as this solitary and altogether private individual, with means apparently the humblest.

In another point of view, moreover, we incline to think that Burns's influence may have been considerable: we mean, as exerted specially on the Literature of his country, at least on the Literature of Scotland. Among the great changes which British, particularly Scottish literature, has undergone since that period, one of the greatest will be found to consist in its remarkable increase of nationality. Even the English writers, most popular in Burns's time, were little distinguished for their literary patriotism, in this its best sense. A certain attenuated cosmopolitanism had, in good measure, taken place of the old insular home-feeling; literature was, as it were, without any local environment; was not nourished by the affections which spring from a native soil. Our Grays and Glovers seemed to write almost as if *in vacuo;* the thing written bears no mark of place; it is not written so much for Englishmen, as for men; or rather, which is the inevitable result of this, for certain Generalizations which philosophy termed men. Goldsmith is an exception; not so Johnson; the scene of his *Rambler* is little more English than that of his *Rasselas.*

But if such was, in some degree, the case with England, it was, in the highest degree, the case with Scotland. In fact, our Scottish literature had, at that period, a very singular aspect; unexampled, so far as we know, except perhaps at Geneva, where the same state of matters appears still to continue. For a long period after Scotland became British, we had no literature: at the date when Addison and Steele were writing their *Spectators,* our good Thomas Boston was writing, with the noblest intent, but alike in defiance of grammar and philosophy, his *Fourfold State of Man.* Then came the schisms in our National Church, and the fiercer schisms in our Body Politic: Theologic ink, and Jacobite blood, with gall enough in both cases, seemed to have blotted out the intellect of the country: however, it was only obscured, not obliterated. Lord Kames made nearly the first attempt at writing English; and ere long, Hume, Robertson, Smith, and a whole host of followers, attracted hither the eyes of all Europe. And yet in this brilliant resuscitation of our "fervid genius," there was nothing truly Scottish, nothing indigenous; except, perhaps, the natural impetuosity of intellect, which we sometimes claim, and are sometimes upbraided with, as a characteristic of our nation. It is curious to remark that Scotland, so full of writers, had no Scottish culture, nor indeed any English; our culture was almost exclusively French. It was by studying Racine and Voltaire, Batteux and Boileau, that Kames had trained himself to be a critic and philosopher; it was the light of Montesquieu and Mably that guided Robertson in his political speculations; Quesnay's lamp that kindled the lamp of Adam Smith. Hume was too rich a man to borrow; and perhaps he reacted on the French more than he was acted on by them: but neither had he aught to do with Scotland; Edinburgh, equally with La Flèche, was but the lodging and laboratory, in which he not so much morally *lived,* as metaphysically *investigated.* Never, perhaps, was there a class of writers so clear and well-ordered, yet so totally destitute, to all appearance, of any patriotic affection, nay of any human affection whatever. The French wits of the period were as unpatriotic: but their general deficiency in moral principle, not to say their avowed sensuality and unbelief in all virtue, strictly so called, render this accountable enough. We hope, there is a patriotism founded on something better than prejudice; that our country may be dear to us, without injury to our philosophy; that in loving and justly prizing all other lands, we may prize justly, and yet love before all others, our own stern Motherland, and the venerable Structure of social and moral Life, which Mind has through long ages been building up for us there. Surely there is nourishment for the better part of man's heart in all this: surely the roots, that have fixed themselves in the very core of man's being, may be so cultivated as to grow up not into briers, but into roses, in the field of his life! Our Scottish sages have no such propensities: the field of their life shows neither briers nor roses; but only a flat, continuous thrashing-floor for Logic, whereon all questions, from the "Doctrine of Rent" to the "Natural History of Religion," are thrashed and sifted with the same mechanical impartiality!

With Sir Walter Scott at the head of our literature, it cannot be denied that much of this evil is past, or rapidly passing away: our chief literary men, whatever other faults they may have, no longer live among us like a French Colony, or some knot of Propaganda Missionaries; but like natural-born subjects of the soil, partaking and sympathizing in all our attachments, humors and habits. Our literature no longer grows in water but in mould, and with the true racy virtues of the soil and climate. How much of this change may be due to Burns, or to any other individual, it might be difficult to estimate. Direct literary imitation of Burns was not to be looked for. But his example, in the fearless adoption of domestic subjects, could not but operate from afar; and certainly in no heart did the love of country ever burn with a warmer glow than in that of Burns: "a tide of Scottish prejudice," as he modestly calls this deep and generous feeling, "had been poured along his veins; and he felt that it would boil there till the flood-gates shut in eternal rest." It seemed to him, as if *he* could do so little for his country, and yet would so gladly have done all. One small province stood open for him, — that of Scottish Song; and how eagerly he entered on it, how devotedly he labored there! In his toilsome journeyings, this object never quits him; it is the little happy-valley of his careworn heart. In the gloom of his own affliction, he eagerly searches after some lonely brother of the muse, and rejoices to snatch one other name from the oblivion that was covering it! These were early feelings, and they abode with him to the end: —

"... A wish (I mind its power),
A wish, that to my latest hour
Will strongly heave my breast, —
That I, for poor auld Scotland's sake,
Some useful plan or book could make,
Or sing a sang at least.

"The rough bur Thistle spreading wide
Amang the bearded bear,
I turn'd my weeding-clips aside,
And spared the symbol dear."

But to leave the mere literary character of Burns, which has already detained us too long. Far more interesting than any of his written works, as it appears to us, are his acted ones: the Life he willed and was fated to lead among his fellow-men. These Poems are but like little rhymed fragments scattered here and there in the grand unrhymed Romance of his earthly existence; and it is only when intercalated in this at their proper places, that they attain their full measure of significance. And this too, alas, was but a fragment! The plan of a mighty edifice had been sketched; some columns, porticos, firm masses of building, stand completed; the rest more or less clearly indicated; with many a far-stretching tendency, which only studious and friendly eyes can now trace towards the purposed termination. For the work is broken off in the middle, almost in the beginning; and rises among us, beautiful and sad, at once unfinished and a ruin! If charitable judgment was necessary in estimating his Poems, and justice required that the aim and the manifest power to fulfil it must often be accepted for the fulfilment; much more is this the case in regard to his Life, the sum and result of all his endeavors, where his difficulties came upon him not in detail only, but in mass; and so much has been left unaccomplished, nay was mistaken, and altogether marred.

Properly speaking, there is but one era in the life of Burns, and that the earliest. We have not youth and manhood, but only youth: for, to the end, we discern no decisive change in the complexion of his character; in his thirty-seventh year, he is still, as it were, in youth. With all that resoluteness of judgment, that penetrating insight, and singular maturity of intellectual power, exhibited in his writings, he never attains to any clearness regarding himself; to the last, he never ascertains his peculiar aim, even with such distinctness as is common among ordinary men; and therefore never can pursue it with that singleness of will, which insures success and some contentment to such men. To the last, he wavers between two purposes: glorying in his talent, like a true poet, he yet cannot consent to make this his chief and sole glory, and to follow it as the one thing needful, through poverty or riches, through good or evil report. Another far meaner ambition still cleaves to him; he must dream and struggle about a certain "Rock of Independence;" which, natural and even admirable as it might be, was still but a warring with the world, on the comparatively insignificant ground of his being more completely or less completely supplied with money than others; of his standing at a higher or at a lower altitude in general estimation than others. For the world still appears to him, as to the young, in borrowed colors: he expects from it what it cannot give to any man; seeks for contentment, not within himself, in action and wise effort, but from without, in the kindness of circumstances, in love, friendship, honor, pecuniary ease. He would be happy, not actively and in himself, but passively and from some ideal cornucopia of Enjoyments, not earned by his own labor, but showered on him by the beneficence of Destiny. Thus, like a young man, he cannot gird himself up for any worthy well-calculated goal, but swerves to and fro, between passionate hope and remorseful disappointment: rushing onwards with a deep tempestuous force, he surmounts or breaks asunder many a barrier; travels, nay advances far, but advancing only under uncertain guidance, is ever and anon turned from his path; and to the last cannot reach the only true happiness of a man, that of clear decided Activity in the sphere for which, by nature and circumstances, he has been fitted and appointed.

We do not say these things in dispraise of Burns; nay, perhaps, they but interest us the more in his favor. This blessing is not given soonest to the best; but rather, it is often the greatest minds that are latest in obtaining it; for where most is to be developed, most time may be required to develop it. A complex condition had been assigned him from without; as complex a condition from within: no "pre-established harmony" existed between the clay soil of Mossgiel and the empyrean soul of Robert Burns; it was not wonderful that the adjustment between them should have been long postponed, and his arm long cumbered, and his sight confused, in so vast and discordant an economy as he had been appointed steward over. Byron was, at his death, but a year younger than Burns; and through life, as it might have appeared, far more simply situated: yet in him too we can trace no such adjustment, no such moral manhood; but at best, and only a little before his end, the beginning of what seemed such.

By much the most striking incident in Burns's Life is his journey to Edinburgh; but perhaps a still more important one is his residence at Irvine, so early as in his twenty-third year. Hitherto his life had been poor and toilworn; but otherwise not ungenial, and, with all its distresses, by no means unhappy. In his parentage, deducting outward circumstances, he had every reason to reckon himself fortunate. His father was a man of thoughtful, intense, earnest character, as the best of our peasants are; valuing knowledge, possessing some, and, what is far better and rarer, open-minded for more: a man with a keen insight and devout heart; reverent towards God, friendly therefore at once, and fearless towards all that God has made: in one word, though but a hard-handed peasant, a complete and fully unfolded *Man*. Such a father is seldom found in any rank in society; and was worth descending far in society to seek. Unfortunately, he was very poor; had he been even a little richer, almost never so little, the whole might have issued far otherwise. Mighty events turn on a straw; the crossing of a brook decides the conquest of the world. Had this William Burns's small seven acres of nursery-ground anywise prospered, the boy Robert had been sent to school; had struggled forward, as so many weaker men do, to some university; come forth not as a rustic wonder, but as a regular well-trained intellectual workman, and changed the whole course of British Literature, — for it lay in him to have done this! But the nursery did not prosper; poverty sank his whole family below the help of even our cheap school-system: Burns remained a hard-worked ploughboy, and British literature took its own course. Nevertheless, even in this rugged scene there is much to nourish him. If he drudges, it is with his brother, and for his father and mother, whom he loves, and would fain shield from want. Wisdom is not banished from their poor hearth, nor the balm of natural feeling: the solemn words, *Let us worship God,* are heard there from a "priest-like father;" if threatenings of unjust men throw mother and children into tears, these are tears not of grief only, but of holiest affection; every heart in that humble group feels itself the closer knit to every other; in their hard warfare they are there together, a "little band of brethren." Neither are such tears, and the deep beauty that dwells in them, their only portion. Light visits the hearts as it does the eyes of all living: there is a force, too, in this youth, that enables him to trample on misfortune; nay to bind it under his feet to make him sport. For a bold, warm, buoyant humor of character has been given him; and so the thick-coming shapes of evil are welcomed with a gay, friendly irony, and in their closest pressure he bates no jot of heart or hope. Vague yearnings of ambition fail not, as he grows up; dreamy fancies hang like cloud-cities around him; the curtain of Existence is slowly rising, in many-colored splendor and gloom: and the auroral light of first love is gilding his horizon, and the music of song is on his path; and so he walks

> ". . . . in glory and in joy,
> Behind his plough, upon the mountain side."

We ourselves know, from the best evidence, that up to this date Burns was happy; nay that he was the gayest, brightest, most fantastic, fascinating being to be found in the world; more so even than he ever afterwards appeared. But now, at this early age, he quits the paternal roof; goes forth into looser, louder, more exciting society; and becomes initiated in those dissipations, those vices, which a certain class of philosophers have asserted to be a natural preparative for entering on active life; a kind of mud-bath, in which the youth is, as it were, necessitated to steep, and, we suppose, cleanse himself, before the real toga of Manhood can be laid on him. We shall not dispute much with this class of philosophers; we hope they are mistaken: for Sin and Remorse so easily beset us at all stages of life, and are always such indifferent company, that it seems hard we should, at any stage, be forced and fated not only to meet but to yield to them, and even serve for a term in their leprous armada. We hope it is not so. Clear we are, at all events, it cannot be the training one receives in this Devil's-service, but only our determining to desert from it, that fits us for true manly Action. We become men, not after we have been dissipated, and disappointed in the chase of false pleasure; but after we have ascertained, in any way, what impassable barriers hem us in through this life; how mad it is to hope for contentment to our infinite soul from the *gifts* of this extremely finite world; that a man must be sufficient for himself; and that for suffering and enduring there is no remedy but striving and doing. Manhood begins when we have in any way made truce with Necessity; begins even when we have surrendered to Necessity, as the most part only do; but begins joyfully and hopefully only when we have reconciled ourselves to Necessity; and thus, in reality, triumphed over it, and felt that in Necessity we are free. Surely, such lessons as this last, which, in one shape or other, is the grand lesson for every mortal man, are better learned from the lips of a devout mother, in the looks and actions of a devout father, while the heart is yet soft and pliant, than in collision with the sharp adamant of Fate, attracting us to shipwreck us, when the heart is grown hard, and may be broken before it will become contrite. Had Burns continued to learn this, as he was already learning it, in his father's cottage, he would have learned it fully, which he never did; and been saved many a lasting aberration, many a bitter hour and year of remorseful sorrow.

It seems to us another circumstance of fatal import in Burns's history, that at this time too he became involved in the religious quarrels of his district; that he was enlisted and feasted, as the fighting man of the New-Light Priesthood, in their highly unprofitable warfare. At the tables of these free-minded clergy he learned much more than was needful for him. Such liberal ridicule of fanaticism awakened in his mind scruples about Religion itself; and a whole world of Doubts, which it required quite another set of conjurers than these men to exorcise. We do not say that such an intellect as his could have escaped similar doubts at some period of his history; or even that he could, at a later period, have come through them altogether victorious and unharmed: but it seems peculiarly unfortunate that this time, above all others, should have been fixed for the encounter. For now, with principles assailed by evil example from without, by "passions raging like demons" from within, he had little need of sceptical misgivings to whisper treason in the heat of the battle, or to cut off his retreat if he were already defeated. He loses his feeling of innocence; his mind is at variance with itself; the old divinity no longer presides there; but wild Desires and wild Repentance alternately oppress him. Ere long, too, he has committed himself before the world; his character for sobriety, dear to a Scottish peasant as few corrupted worldlings can even conceive, is destroyed in the eyes of men; and his only refuge consists in trying to disbelieve his guiltiness, and is but a refuge of lies. The blackest desperation now gathers over him, broken only by red lightnings of remorse. The whole fabric of his life is blasted asunder; for now not only his character, but his personal liberty, is to be lost; men and Fortune are leagued for his hurt; "hungry Ruin has him in the wind." He sees no escape but the saddest of all: exile from his loved country, to a country in every sense inhospitable and abhorrent to him. While the "gloomy night is gathering fast," in mental storm and solitude, as well as in physical, he sings his wild farewell to Scotland: —

> "Farewell, my friends; farewell, my foes!
> My peace with these, my love with those:
> The bursting tears my heart declare;
> Adieu, my native banks of Ayr!"

Light breaks suddenly in on him in floods; but still a false transitory light, and no real sunshine. He is invited to Edinburgh; hastens thither with anticipating heart; is welcomed as in a triumph, and with universal blandishment and acclamation; whatever is wisest, whatever is greatest or loveliest there, gathers round him, to gaze on his face, to show him honor, sympathy, affection. Burns's appearance among the sages and nobles of Edinburgh must be regarded as one of the most singular phenomena in modern Literature; almost like the appearance of some Napoleon among the crowned sovereigns of modern Politics. For it is nowise as "a mockery king," set there by favor, transiently and for a purpose, that he will let himself be treated; still less is he a mad Rienzi, whose sudden elevation turns his too weak head: but he stands there on his own basis; cool, unastonished, holding his equal rank from Nature herself; putting forth no claim which there is not strength *in* him, as well as about him, to vindicate. Mr. Lockhart has some forcible observations on this point: —

"It needs no effort of imagination," says he, "to conceive what the sensations of an isolated set of scholars (almost all either clergymen or professors) must have been in the presence of this big-boned, black-browed, brawny stranger, with his great flashing eyes, who, having forced his way among them from the plough-tail at a single stride, manifested in the whole strain of his bearing and conversation a most thorough conviction, that in the society of the most eminent men of his nation he was exactly where he was entitled to be; hardly deigned to flatter them by exhibiting even an occasional symptom of being flattered by their notice; by turns calmly measured himself against the most cultivated understandings of his time in discussion; overpowered the *bon-mots* of the most celebrated convivialists by broad floods of merriment, impregnated with all the burning life of genius; astounded bosoms habitually enveloped in the thrice-piled folds of social reserve, by compelling them to tremble, — nay, to tremble visibly, — beneath the fearless touch of natural pathos; and all this without indicating the smallest willingness to be ranked among those professional ministers of excitement, who are content to be paid in money and smiles for doing what the spectators and auditors would be ashamed of doing in their own persons, even if they had the power of doing it; and last, and probably worst of all, who was known to be in the habit of enlivening societies which they would have scorned to approach, still more frequently than their own, with eloquence no less magnificent; with wit, in all likelihood still more daring; often enough, as the superiors whom he fronted without alarm might have guessed from the beginning, and had ere long no occasion to guess, with wit pointed at themselves."

The farther we remove from this scene, the more singular will it seem to us: details of the exterior aspect of it are already full of interest. Most readers recollect Mr. Walker's personal interviews with Burns as among the best passages of his Narrative: a time will come when this reminiscence of Sir Walter Scott's, slight though it is, will also be precious: —

"As for Burns," writes Sir Walter, "I may truly say, *Virgilium vidi tantùm.* I was a lad of fifteen in 1786–87, when he came first to Edinburgh, but had sense and feeling enough to be much interested in his poetry, and would have given the world to know him: but I had very little acquaintance with any literary people, and still less with the gentry of the west country, the two sets that he most frequented. Mr. Thomas Grierson was at that time a clerk of my father's. He knew Burns, and promised to ask him to his lodgings to dinner; but had no opportunity to keep his word; otherwise I might have seen more of this distinguished man. As it was, I saw him one day at the late venerable Professor Ferguson's, where there were several gentlemen of literary reputation, among whom I remember the celebrated Mr. Dugald Stewart. Of course, we youngsters sat silent, looked and listened. The only thing I remember which was remarkable in Burns's manner, was the effect produced upon him by a print of Bunbury's, representing a soldier lying dead on the snow, his dog sitting in misery on one side, — on the other, his widow, with a child in her arms. These lines were written beneath: —

> 'Cold on Canadian hills, or Minden's plain,
> Perhaps that mother wept her soldier slain;
> Bent o'er her babe, her eye dissolved in dew,
> The big drops mingling with the milk he drew,
> Gave the sad presage of his future years,
> The child of misery baptized in tears.'

"Burns seemed much affected by the print, or rather by the ideas which it suggested to his mind. He actually shed tears. He asked whose the lines were; and it chanced that nobody but myself remembered that they occur in a half-forgotten poem of Langhorne's called by the unpromising title of 'The Justice of Peace.' I whispered my information to a friend present; he mentioned it to Burns, who rewarded me with a look and a word, which, though of mere civility, I then received and still recollect with very great pleasure.

"His person was strong and robust; his manners rustic, not clownish; a sort of dignified plainness and simplicity, which received part of its effect perhaps from one's knowledge of his extraordinary talents. His features are represented in Mr. Nasmyth's picture: but to me it conveys the idea that they are diminished, as if seen in perspective. I think his countenance was more massive than it looks in any of the portraits. I should have taken the poet, had I not known what he was, for a very sagacious country farmer of the old Scotch school, *i.e.* none of your modern agriculturists who keep laborers for their drudgery, but the *douce gudeman* who held his own plough. There was a strong expression of sense and shrewdness in all his lineaments; the eye alone, I think, indicated the poetical character and temperament. It was large, and of a dark cast, which glowed (I say literally *glowed*) when he spoke with feeling or interest. I never saw such another eye in a human head, though I have seen the most distinguished men of my time. His conversation expressed perfect self-confidence, without the slightest presumption. Among the men who were the most learned of their time and country, he expressed himself with perfect firmness, but without the least intrusive forwardness; and when he differed in opinion, he did not hesitate to express it firmly, yet at the same time with modesty. I do not remember any part of his conversation distinctly enough to be quoted; nor did I ever see him again, except in the street, where he did not recognize me, as I could not expect he should. He was much caressed in Edinburgh: but (considering what literary emoluments have been since his day) the efforts made for his relief were extremely trifling.

"I remember, on this occasion I mention, I thought Burns's acquaintance with English poetry was rather limited; and also that, having twenty times the abilities of Allan Ramsay and of Ferguson, he talked of them with too much humility as his models: there was doubtless national predilection in his estimate.

"This is all I can tell you about Burns. I have only to add, that his dress corresponded with his manner. He was like a farmer dressed in his best to dine with the laird. I do not speak *in malam partem*, when I say, I never saw a man in company with his superiors in station or information more perfectly free from either the reality or the affectation of embarrassment. I was told, but did not observe it, that his address to females was extremely deferential, and always with a turn either to the pathetic or humorous, which engaged their attention particularly. I have heard the late Duchess of Gordon remark this.— I do not know anything I can add to these recollections of forty years since."

The conduct of Burns under this dazzling blaze of favor; the calm, unaffected, manly manner in which he not only bore it, but estimated its value, has justly been regarded as the best proof that could be given of his real vigor and integrity of mind. A little natural vanity, some touches of hypocritical modesty, some glimmerings of affectation, at least some fear of being thought affected, we could have pardoned in almost any man; but no such indication is to be traced here In his unexampled situation the young peasant is not a moment perplexed; so many strange lights do not confuse him, do not lead him astray. Nevertheless, we cannot but perceive that this winter did him great and lasting injury. A somewhat clearer knowledge of men's affairs, scarcely of their characters, it did afford him; but a sharper feeling of Fortune's unequal arrangements in their social destiny it also left with him. He had seen the gay and gorgeous arena, in which the powerful are born to play their parts; nay had himself stood in the midst of it; and he felt more bitterly than ever, that here he was but a looker-on, and had no part or lot in that splendid game. From this time a jealous indignant fear of social degradation takes possession of him; and perverts, so far as aught could pervert, his private contentment, and his feelings towards his richer fellows. It was clear to Burns that he had talent enough to make a fortune, or a hundred fortunes, could he but have rightly willed this; it was clear also that he willed something far different, and therefore could not make one. Unhappy it was that he had not power to choose the one, and reject the other; but must halt forever between two opinions, two objects; making hampered advancement towards either. But so is it with many men; we "long for the merchandise, yet would fain keep the price;" and so stand chaffering with Fate, in vexatious altercation, till the night come, and our fair is over!

The Edinburgh Learned of that period were in general more noted for clearness of head than for warmth of heart: with the exception of the good old Blacklock, whose help was too ineffectual, scarcely one among them seems to have looked at Burns with any true sympathy, or indeed much otherwise than as at a highly curious *thing*. By the great also he is treated in the customary fashion; entertained at their tables and dismissed: certain modica of pudding and praise are, from time to time, gladly exchanged for the fascination of his presence; which exchange once effected, the bargain is finished, and each party goes his several way. At the end of this strange season, Burns gloomily sums up his gains and losses, and meditates on the chaotic future. In money he is somewhat richer; in fame and the show of happiness, infinitely richer; but in the substance of it, as poor as ever. Nay poorer; for his heart is now maddened still more with the fever of worldly Ambition; and through long years the disease will rack him with unprofitable sufferings, and weaken his strength for all true and nobler aims.

What Burns was next to do or to avoid; how a man so circumstanced was now to guide himself towards his true advantage, might at this point of time have been a question for the wisest. It was a question too, which apparently he was left altogether to answer for himself: of his learned or rich patrons it had not struck any individual to turn a thought on this so trivial matter. Without claiming for Burns the praise of perfect sagacity, we must say, that his Excise and Farm scheme does not seem to us a very unreasonable one; that we should be at a loss, even now, to suggest one decidedly better. Certain of his admirers have felt scandalized at his ever resolving to *gauge;* and would have had him lie at the pool, till the spirit of Patronage stirred the waters, that so, with one friendly plunge, all his sorrows might be healed. Unwise counsellors! They know not the manner of this spirit; and how, in the lap of most golden dreams, a man might have happiness, were it not that in the interim he must die of hunger! It reflects credit on the manliness and sound sense of Burns, that he felt so early on what ground he was standing; and preferred self-help, on the humblest scale, to dependence and inaction, though with hope of far more splendid possibilities. But even these possibilities were not rejected in his scheme: he might expect, if it chanced that he *had* any friend, to rise, in no long period, into something even like opulence and leisure; while again, if it chanced that he had no friend, he could still live in security; and for the rest, he "did not intend to borrow honor from any profession." We reckon that his plan was honest and well-calculated: all turned on the execution of it. Doubtless it failed; yet not, we believe, from any vice inherent in itself. Nay, after all, it was no failure of external means, but of internal, that overtook Burns. His was no bankruptcy of the purse, but of the soul; to his last day, he owed no man anything.

Meanwhile he begins well: with two good and wise actions. His donation to his mother, munificent from a man whose income had lately been seven pounds a year, was worthy of him, and not more than worthy. Generous also, and worthy of him, was the treatment of the woman whose life's welfare now depended on his pleasure. A friendly observer might have hoped serene days for him: his mind is on the true road to peace with itself: what clearness he still wants will be given as he proceeds; for the best teacher of duties, that still lie dim to us, is the Practice of those we see and have at hand. Had the "patrons of genius," who could give him nothing, but taken nothing from him, at least nothing more! The wounds of his heart would have healed, vulgar ambition would have died away. Toil and Frugality would have been welcome, since Virtue dwelt with them; and Poetry would have shone through them as of old: and in her clear ethereal light, which was his own by birthright, he might have looked down on his earthly destiny, and all its obstructions, not with patience only, but with love.

But the patrons of genius would not have it so. Picturesque tourists,[1] all manner of fashionable danglers after literature, and, far worse, all manner of convivial Mæcenases, hovered round him in his retreat; and his good as well as his weak qualities secured them influence over him. He was flattered by their notice; and his warm social nature made it impossible for him to shake them off, and hold on his way apart from them. These men, as we believe, were proximately the means of his ruin. Not that they meant him any ill; they only meant themselves a little good; if he suffered harm, let *him* look to it! But they wasted his precious time and his precious talent; they disturbed his composure, broke down his returning habits of temperance and assiduous contented exertion. Their pampering was baneful to him; their cruelty, which soon followed, was equally baneful. The old grudge against Fortune's inequality awoke with new bitterness in their neighborhood; and Burns had no retreat but to "the Rock of Independence," which is but an air-castle after all, that looks well at a distance, but will screen no one from real wind and wet. Flushed with irregular excitement, exasperated alternately by contempt of others, and contempt of himself, Burns was no longer regaining his peace of mind, but fast losing it forever. There was a hollowness at the heart of his life, for his conscience did not now approve what he was doing.

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[1] There is one little sketch by certain "English gentlemen" of this class, which, though adopted in Currie's Narrative, and since then repeated in most others, we have all along felt an invincible disposition to regard as imaginary: "On a rock that projected into the stream, they saw a man employed in angling, of a singular appearance. He had a cap made of fox-skin on his head, a loose great-coat fixed round him by a belt, from which depended an enormous Highland broad-sword. It was Burns." Now, we rather think it was *not* Burns. For, to say nothing of the fox-skin cap, the loose and quite Hibernian watch-coat with the belt, what are we to make of this "enormous Highland broad-sword" depending from him? More especially, as there is no word of parish constables on the outlook to see whether, as Dennis phrases it, he had an eye to his own midriff or that of the public! Burns, of all men, had the least need, and the least tendency, to seek for distinction, either in his own eyes, or those of others, by such poor mummeries.

Amid the vapors of unwise enjoyment, of bootless remorse, and angry discontent with Fate, his true loadstar, a life of Poetry, with Poverty, nay with Famine if it must be so, was too often altogether hidden from his eyes. And yet he sailed a sea, where without some such loadstar there was no right steering. Meteors of French Politics rise before him, but these were not *his* stars. An accident this, which hastened, but did not originate, his worst distresses. In the mad contentions of that time, he comes in collision with certain official Superiors; is wounded by them; cruelly lacerated, we should say, could a dead mechanical implement, in any case, be called cruel: and shrinks, in indignant pain, into deeper self-seclusion, into gloomier moodiness than ever. His life has now lost its unity: it is a life of fragments; led with little aim, beyond the melancholy one of securing its own continuance, — in fits of wild false joy when such offered, and of black despondency when they passed away. His character before the world begins to suffer: calumny is busy with him; for a miserable man makes more enemies than friends. Some faults he has fallen into, and a thousand misfortunes; but deep criminality is what he stands accused of, and they that are *not* without sin cast the first stone at him! For is he not a well-wisher to the French Revolution, a Jacobin, and therefore in that one act guilty of all? These accusations, political and moral, it has since appeared, were false enough: but the world hesitated little to credit them. Nay his convivial Mæcenases themselves were not the last to do it. There is reason to believe that, in his later years, the Dumfries Aristocracy had partly withdrawn themselves from Burns, as from a tainted person, no longer worthy of their acquaintance. That painful class, stationed, in all provincial cities, behind the outmost breastwork of Gentility, there to stand siege and do battle against the intrusions of Grocerdom and Grazierdom, had actually seen dishonor in the society of Burns, and branded him with their veto; had, as we vulgarly say, *cut* him! We find one passage in this Work of Mr. Lockhart's, which will not out of our thoughts: —

"A gentleman of that county, whose name I have already more than once had occasion to refer to, has often told me that he was seldom more grieved, than when riding into Dumfries one fine summer evening about this time to attend a county ball, he saw Burns walking alone, on the shady side of the principal street of the town, while the opposite side was gay with successive groups of gentlemen and ladies, all drawn together for the festivities of the night, not one of whom appeared willing to recognize him. The horseman dismounted, and joined Burns, who on his proposing to cross the street said: 'Nay, nay, my young friend, that's all over now;' and quoted, after a pause, some verses of Lady Grizzel Baillie's pathetic ballad: —

'His bonnet stood ance fu' fair on his brow,
His auld ane look'd better than mony ane's new;
But now he lets 't wear ony way it will hing,
And casts himsell dowie upon the corn-bing.

'Oh, were we young as we ance hae been,
We sud hae been gallopping down on yon green,
And linking it ower the lily-white lea!
And werena my heart light, I wad die.'

It was little in Burns's character to let his feelings on certain subjects escape in this fashion. He, immediately after reciting these verses, assumed the sprightliness of his most pleasing manner; and taking his young friend home with him, entertained him very agreeably till the hour of the ball arrived."

Alas! when we think that Burns now sleeps "where bitter indignation can no longer lacerate his heart,"[1] and that most of those fair dames and frizzled gentlemen already lie at his side, where the breastwork of gentility is quite thrown down, — who would not sigh over the thin delusions and foolish toys that divide heart from heart, and make man unmerciful to his brother!

It was not now to be hoped that the genius of Burns would ever reach maturity, or accomplish aught worthy of itself. His spirit was jarred in its melody; not the soft breath of natural feeling, but the rude hand of Fate, was now sweeping over the strings. And yet what harmony was in him, what music even in his discords! How the wild tones had a charm for the simplest and the wisest; and all men felt and knew that here also was one of the Gifted! "If he entered an inn at midnight, after all the inmates were in bed, the news of his arrival circulated from the cellar to the garret; and ere ten minutes had elapsed, the landlord and all his guests were assembled!" Some brief pure moments of poetic life were yet appointed him, in the composition of his Songs. We can understand how he grasped at this employment; and how too, he spurned all other reward for it but what the labor itself brought him. For the soul of Burns, though scathed and marred, was yet living in its full moral strength, though sharply conscious of its errors and abasement: and here, in his destitution and degradation, was one act of seeming nobleness and self-devotedness left even for him to perform. He felt too, that with all the "thoughtless follies" that had "laid him low," the world was unjust and cruel to him; and he silently appealed to another and calmer time. Not as a hired soldier, but as a patriot, would he strive for the glory of his country: so he cast from him the poor sixpence a day, and served zealously as a volunteer. Let us not grudge him this last luxury of his existence; let him not have appealed to us in vain! The money was not necessary to him; he struggled through without it: long since, these guineas would have been gone, and now the high-mindedness of refusing them will plead for him in all hearts forever.

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[1] *Ubi sæva indignatio cor ulterius lacerare nequit.* Swift's Epitaph.

We are here arrived at the crisis of Burns's life; for matters had now taken such a shape with him as could not long continue. If improvement was not to be looked for, Nature could only for a limited time maintain this dark and maddening warfare against the world and itself. We are not medically informed whether any continuance of years was, at this period, probable for Burns; whether his death is to be looked on as in some sense an accidental event, or only as the natural consequence of the long series of events that had preceded. The latter seems to be the likelier opinion; and yet it is by no means a certain one. At all events, as we have said, *some* change could not be very distant. Three gates of deliverance, it seems to us, were open for Burns: clear poetical activity; madness; or death. The first, with longer life, was still possible, though not probable; for physical causes were beginning to be concerned in it: and yet Burns had an iron resolution; could he but have seen and felt, that not only his highest glory, but his first duty, and the true medicine for all his woes, lay here. The second was still less probable; for his mind was ever among the clearest and firmest. So the milder third gate was opened for him: and he passed, not softly yet speedily, into that still country, where the hail-storms and fire-showers do not reach, and the heaviest-laden wayfarer at length lays down his load!

Contemplating this sad end of Burns, and how he sank unaided by any real help, uncheered by any wise sympathy, generous minds have sometimes figured to themselves, with a reproachful sorrow, that much might have been done for him; that by counsel, true affection and friendly ministrations, he might have been saved to himself and the world. We question whether there is not more tenderness of heart than soundness of judgment in these suggestions. It seems dubious to us whether the richest, wisest, most benevolent individual could have lent Burns any effectual help. Counsel, which seldom profits any one, he did not need; in his understanding, he knew the right from the wrong, as well perhaps as any man ever did; but the persuasion, which would have availed him, lies not so much in the head as in the heart, where no argument or expostulation could have assisted much to implant it. As to money again, we do not believe that this was his essential want; or well see how any private man could, even presupposing Burns's consent, have bestowed on him an independent fortune, with much prospect of decisive advantage. It is a mortifying truth, that two men in any rank of society, could hardly be found virtuous enough to give money, and to take it as a necessary gift, without injury to the moral entireness of one or both. But so stands the fact: Friendship, in the old heroic sense of that term, no longer exists; except in the cases of kindred or other legal affinity, it is in reality no longer expected, or recognized as a virtue among men. A close observer of manners has pronounced "Patronage," that is, pecuniary or other economic furtherance, to be "twice cursed;" cursing him that gives, and him that takes! And thus, in regard to outward matters also, it has become the rule, as in regard to inward it always was and must be the rule, that no one shall look for effectual help to another; but that each shall rest contented with what help he can afford himself. Such, we say, is the principle of modern Honor; naturally enough growing out of that sentiment of Pride, which we inculcate and encourage as the basis of our whole social morality. Many a poet has been poorer than Burns; but no one was ever prouder: we may question whether, without great precautions, even a pension from Royalty would not have galled and encumbered, more than actually assisted him.

Still less, therefore, are we disposed to join with another class of Burns's admirers, who accuse the higher ranks among us of having ruined Burns by their selfish neglect of him. We have already stated our doubts whether direct pecuniary help, had it been offered, would have been accepted, or could have proved very effectual. We shall readily admit, however, that much was to be done for Burns; that many a poisoned arrow might have been warded from his bosom; many an entanglement in his path cut asunder by the hand of the powerful; and light and heat, shed on him from high places, would have made his humble atmosphere more genial; and the softest heart then breathing might have lived and died with some fewer pangs. Nay, we shall grant farther, and for Burns it is granting much, that, with all his pride, he would have thanked, even with exaggerated gratitude, any one who had cordially befriended him: patronage, unless once cursed, needed not to have been twice so. At all events, the poor promotion he desired in his calling might have been granted: it was his own scheme, therefore likelier than any other to be of service. All this it might have been a luxury, nay it was a duty, for our nobility to have done. No part of all this, however, did any of them do; or apparently attempt, or wish to do: so much is granted against them. But what then is the amount of their blame? Simply that they were men of the world, and walked by the principles of such men; that they treated Burns, as other nobles and other commoners had done other poets; as the English did Shakspeare; as King Charles and his Cavaliers did Butler, as King Philip and his Grandees did Cervantes. Do men gather grapes of thorns; or shall we cut down our thorns for yielding only a *fence* and haws? How, indeed, could the "nobility and gentry of his native land" hold out any help to this "Scottish Bard, proud of his name and country"? Were the nobility and gentry so much as able rightly to help themselves? Had they not their game to preserve; their borough interests to strengthen; dinners, therefore, of various kinds to eat and give? Were their means more than adequate to all this business, or less than adequate? Less than adequate, in general; few of them in reality were richer than Burns; many of them were poorer; for sometimes they had to wring their supplies, as with thumbscrews, from the hard hand; and, in their need of guineas, to forget their duty of mercy; which Burns was never reduced to do. Let us pity and forgive them. The game they preserved and shot, the dinners they ate and gave, the borough interests they strengthened, the *little* Babylons they severally builded by the glory of their might, are all melted or melting back into the primeval Chaos, as man's merely selfish endeavors are fated to do: and here was an action, extending, in virtue of its worldly influence, we may say, through all time; in virtue of its moral nature, beyond all time, being immortal as the Spirit of Goodness itself; this action was offered them to do, and light was not given them to do it. Let us pity and forgive them. But better than pity, let us go and *do otherwise.* Human suffering did not end with the life of Burns; neither was the solemn mandate, "Love one another, bear one another's burdens," given to the rich only, but to all men. True, we shall find no Burns to relieve, to assuage by our aid or our pity; but celestial natures, groaning under the fardels of a weary life, we shall still find; and that wretchedness which Fate has rendered *voiceless* and *tuneless* is not the least wretched, but the most.

Still, we do not think that the blame of Burns's failure lies chiefly with the world. The world, it seems to us, treated him with more rather than with less kindness than it usually shows to such men. It has ever, we fear, shown but small favor to its Teachers: hunger and nakedness, perils and revilings, the prison, the cross, the poison-chalice have, in most times and countries, been the market-price it has offered for Wisdom, the welcome with which it has greeted those who have come to enlighten and purify it. Homer and Socrates, and the Christian Apostles, belong to old days; but the world's Martyrology was not completed with these. Roger Bacon and Galileo languish in priestly dungeons; Tasso pines in the cell of a madhouse; Camoens dies begging on the streets of Lisbon. So neglected, so "persecuted they the Prophets," not in Judea only, but in all places where men have been. We reckon that every poet of Burns's order is, or should be, a prophet and teacher to his age; that he has no right to expect great kindness from it, but rather is bound to do it great kindness; that Burns, in particular, experienced fully the usual proportion of the world's goodness; and that the blame of his failure, as we have said, lies not chiefly with the world.

Where, then, does it lie? We are forced to answer: With himself; it is his inward, not his outward misfortunes that bring him to the dust. Seldom, indeed, is it otherwise;

seldom is a life morally wrecked but the grand cause lies in some internal mal-arrangement, some want less of good fortune than of good guidance. Nature fashions no creature without implanting in it the strength needful for its action and duration; least of all does she so neglect her masterpiece and darling, the poetic soul. Neither can we believe that it is in the power of *any* external circumstances utterly to ruin the mind of a man; nay if proper wisdom be given him, even so much as to affect its essential health and beauty. The sternest sum-total of all worldly misfortunes is Death; nothing more *can* lie in the cup of human woe: yet many men, in all ages, have triumphed over Death, and led it captive; converting its physical victory into a moral victory for themselves, into a seal and immortal consecration for all that their past life had achieved. What has been done, may be done again: nay, it is but the degree and not the kind of such heroism that differs in different seasons; for without some portion of this spirit, not of boisterous daring, but of silent fearlessness, of Self-denial in all its forms, no good man, in any scene or time, has ever attained to be good.

We have already stated the error of Burns; and mourned over it, rather than blamed it. It was the want of unity in his purposes, of consistency in his aims; the hapless attempt to mingle in friendly union the common spirit of the world with the spirit of poetry, which is of a far different and altogether irreconcilable nature. Burns was nothing wholly; and Burns could be nothing, no man formed as he was can be anything, by halves. The heart, not of a mere hot-blooded, popular Verse-monger, or poetical *Restaurateur*, but of a true Poet and Singer, worthy of the old religious heroic times, had been given him: and he fell in an age, not of heroism and religion, but of scepticism, selfishness and triviality, when true Nobleness was little understood, and its place supplied by a hollow, dissocial, altogether barren and unfruitful principle of Pride. The influences of that age, his open, kind, susceptible nature, to say nothing of his highly untoward situation, made it more than usually difficult for him to cast aside, or rightly subordinate; the better spirit that was within him ever sternly demanded its rights, its supremacy: he spent his life in endeavoring to reconcile these two; and lost it, as he must lose it, without reconciling them.

Burns was born poor; and born also to continue poor, for he would not endeavor to be otherwise: this it had been well could he have once for all admitted, and considered as finally settled. He was poor, truly; but hundreds even of his own class and order of minds have been poorer, yet have suffered nothing deadly from it: nay, his own Father had a far sorer battle with ungrateful destiny than his was; and he did not yield to it, but died courageously warring, and to all moral intents prevailing, against it. True, Burns had little means, had even little time for poetry, his only real pursuit and vocation; but so much the more precious was what little he had. In all these external respects his case was hard; but very far from the hardest. Poverty, incessant drudgery and much worse evils, it has often been the lot of Poets and wise men to strive with, and their glory to conquer. Locke was banished as a traitor; and wrote his *Essay on the Human Understanding* sheltering himself in a Dutch garret. Was Milton rich or at his ease when he composed *Paradise Lost?* Not only low, but fallen from a height; not only poor, but impoverished; in darkness and with dangers compassed round, he sang his immortal song, and found fit audience, though few. Did not Cervantes finish his work, a maimed soldier and in prison? Nay, was not the *Araucana*, which Spain acknowledges as its Epic, written without even the aid of paper; on scraps of leather, as the stout fighter and voyager snatched any moment from that wild warfare?

And what, then, had these men, which Burns wanted? Two things; both which, it seems to us, are indispensable for such men. They had a true, religious principle of morals; and a single, not a double aim in their activity. They were not self-seekers and self-worshippers; but seekers and worshippers of something far better than Self. Not personal enjoyment was their object; but a high, heroic idea of Religion, of Patriotism, of heavenly Wisdom, in one or the other form, ever hovered before them; in which cause they neither shrank from suffering, nor called on the earth to witness it as something wonderful; but patiently endured, counting it blessedness enough so to spend and be spent. Thus the "golden-calf of Self-love," however curiously carved, was not their Deity; but the Invisible Goodness, which alone is man's reasonable service. This feeling was as a celestial fountain, whose streams refreshed into gladness and beauty all the provinces of their otherwise too desolate existence. In a word, they willed one thing, to which all other things were subordinated and made subservient; and therefore they accomplished it. The wedge will rend rocks; but its edge must be sharp and single: if it be double, the wedge is bruised in pieces and will rend nothing.

Part of this superiority these men owed to their age; in which heroism and devotedness were still practised, or at least not yet disbelieved in: but much of it likewise they owed to themselves. With Burns, again, it was different. His morality, in most of its practical points, is that of a mere worldly man; enjoyment, in a finer or coarser shape, is the only thing he longs and strives for. A noble instinct sometimes raises him above this; but an instinct only, and acting only for moments. He has no Religion; in the shallow age, where his days were cast, Religion was not discriminated from the New and Old Light *forms* of Religion; and was, with these, becoming obsolete in the minds of men. His heart, indeed, is alive with a trembling adoration, but there is no temple in his understanding. He lives in darkness and in the shadow of doubt. His religion, at best, is an anxious wish; like that of Rabelais, "a great Perhaps."

He loved Poetry warmly, and in his heart; could he but have loved it purely, and with his whole undivided heart, it had been well. For Poetry, as Burns could have followed it, is but another form of Wisdom, of Religion; is itself Wisdom and Religion. But this also was denied him. His poetry is a stray vagrant gleam, which will not be extinguished within him, yet rises not to be the true light of his path, but is often a wildfire that misleads him. It was not necessary for Burns to be rich, to be, or to seem, "independent;" but it *was* necessary for him to be at one with his own heart; to place what was highest in his nature highest also in his life; "to seek within himself for that consistency and sequence, which external events would forever refuse him." He was born a poet; poetry was the celestial element of his being, and should have been the soul of his whole endeavors. Lifted into that serene ether, whither he had wings given him to mount, he would have needed no other elevation: poverty, neglect and all evil, save the desecration of himself and his Art, were a small matter to him; the pride and the passions of the world lay far beneath his feet; and he looked down alike on noble and slave, on prince and beggar, and all that wore the stamp of man, with clear recognition, with brotherly affection, with sympathy, with pity. Nay, we question whether for his culture as a Poet, poverty and much suffering for a season were not absolutely advantageous. Great men, in looking back over their lives, have testified to that effect. "I would not for much," says Jean Paul, "that I had been born richer." And yet Paul's birth was poor enough; for, in another place, he adds: "The prisoner's allowance is bread and water; and I had often only the latter." But the gold that is refined in the hottest furnace comes out the purest; or, as he has himself expressed it, "the canary-bird sings sweeter the longer it has been trained in a darkened cage."

A man like Burns might have divided his hours between poetry and virtuous industry; industry which all true feeling sanctions, nay prescribes, and which has a beauty, for that cause, beyond the pomp of thrones: but to divide his hours between poetry and rich men's banquets was an ill-starred and inauspicious attempt. How could he be at ease at such banquets? What had he to do there, mingling his music with the coarse roar of altogether earthly voices; brightening the thick smoke of intoxication with fire lent him from heaven? Was it his aim to *enjoy* life? To-morrow he must go drudge as an Exciseman! We wonder not that Burns became moody, indignant, and at times an offender against certain rules of society; but rather that he did not grow utterly frantic, and run *amuck* against them all. How could a man, so falsely placed, by his own or others' fault, ever know contentment or peaceable diligence for an hour? What he did, under such perverse guidance, and what he forbore to do, alike fill us with astonishment at the natural strength and worth of his character.

Doubtless there was a remedy for this perverseness; but not in others; only in himself; least of all in simple increase of wealth and worldly "respectability." We hope we have now heard enough about the efficacy of wealth for poetry, and to make poets happy. Nay have we not seen another instance of it in these very days? Byron, a man of an endowment considerably less ethereal than that of Burns, is born in the rank not of a Scottish ploughman, but of an English peer: the highest worldly honors, the fairest worldly career, are his by inheritance; the richest harvest of fame he soon reaps, in another province, by his own hand. And what does all this avail him? Is he happy, is he good, is he true? Alas, he has a poet's soul, and strives towards the Infinite and the Eternal; and soon feels that all this is but mounting to the house-top to reach the stars! Like Burns, he is only a proud man; might, like him, have "purchased a pocket-copy of Milton to study the character of Satan;" for Satan also is Byron's grand exemplar, the hero of his poetry, and the model apparently of his conduct. As in Burns's case too, the celestial element will not mingle with the clay of earth; both poet and man of the world he must not be; vulgar Ambition will not live kindly with poetic Adoration; he *cannot* serve God and Mammon. Byron, like Burns, is not happy; nay he is the most wretched of all men. His life is falsely arranged: the fire that is in him is not a strong, still, central fire, warming into beauty the products of a world; but it is the mad fire of a volcano; and now — we look sadly into the ashes of a crater, which ere long will fill itself with snow!

Byron and Burns were sent forth as missionaries to their generation, to teach it a higher Doctrine, a purer Truth; they had a message to deliver, which left them no rest till it was accomplished; in dim throes of pain, this divine behest lay smouldering within them; for they knew not what it meant, and felt it only in mysterious anticipation, and they had to die without articulately uttering it. They are in the camp of the Unconverted; yet not as high messengers of rigorous though benignant truth, but as soft flattering singers, and in pleasant fellowship will they live there: they are first adulated, then persecuted; they accomplish little for others; they find no peace for themselves, but only death and the peace of the grave. We confess, it is not without a certain mournful awe that we view the fate of these noble souls, so richly gifted, yet ruined to so little purpose with all their gifts. It seems to us there is a stern moral taught in this piece of history,—*twice* told us in our own time! Surely to men of like genius, if there be any such, it carries with it a lesson of deep impressive significance. Surely it would become such a man, furnished for the highest of all enterprises, that of being the Poet of his Age, to consider well what it is that he attempts, and in what spirit he attempts it. For the words of Milton are true in all times, and were never truer than in this: "He who would write heroic poems must make his whole life a heroic poem." If he cannot first so make his life, then let him hasten from this arena; for neither its lofty glories, nor its fearful perils, are fit for him. Let him dwindle into a modish balladmonger; let him worship and besing the idols of the time, and the time will not fail to reward him. If, indeed, he can endure to live in that capacity! Byron and Burns could not live as idol-priests, but the fire of their own hearts consumed them; and better it was for them that they could not. For it is not in the favor of the great or of the small, but in a life of truth, and in the inexpugnable citadel of his own soul, that a Byron's or a Burns's strength must lie. Let the great stand aloof from him, or know how to reverence him. Beautiful is the union of wealth with favor and furtherance for literature; like the costliest flower-jar enclosing the loveliest amaranth. Yet let not the relation be mistaken. A true poet is not one whom they can hire by money or flattery to be a minister of their pleasures, their writer of occasional verses, their purveyor of table-wit; he cannot be their menial, he cannot even be their partisan. At the peril of both parties, let no such union be attempted! Will a Courser of the Sun work softly in the harness of a Dray-horse? His hoofs are of fire, and his path is through the heavens, bringing light to all lands; will he lumber on mud highways, dragging ale for earthly appetites from door to door?

But we must stop short in these considerations, which would lead us to boundless lengths. We had something to say on the public moral character of Burns; but this also we must forbear. We are far from regarding him as guilty before the world, as guiltier than the average; nay from doubting that he is less guilty than one of ten thousand. Tried at a tribunal far more rigid than that where the *Plebiscita* of common civic reputations are pronounced, he has seemed to us even there less worthy of blame than of pity and wonder. But the world is habitually unjust in its judgments of such men; unjust on many grounds, of which this one may be stated as the substance: It decides, like a court of law, by dead statutes; and not positively but negatively, less on what is done right, than on what is or is not done wrong. Not the few inches of deflection from the mathematical orbit, which are so easily measured, but the *ratio* of these to the whole diameter, constitutes the real aberration. This orbit may be a planet's, its diameter the breadth of the solar system; or it may be a city hippodrome; nay the circle of a gin-horse, its diameter a score of feet or paces. But the inches of deflection only are measured: and it is assumed that the diameter of the gin-horse, and that of the planet, will yield the same ratio when compared with them! Here lies the root of many a blind, cruel condemnation of Burnses, Swifts, Rousseaus, which one never listens to with approval. Granted, the ship comes into harbor with shrouds and tackle damaged; the pilot is blameworthy; he has not been all-wise and all-powerful: but to know *how* blameworthy, tell us first whether his voyage has been round the Globe, or only to Ramsgate and the Isle of Dogs.

With our readers in general, with men of right feeling anywhere, we are not required to plead for Burns. In pitying admiration he lies enshrined in all our hearts, in a far nobler mausoleum than that one of marble; neither will his Works, even as they are, pass away from the memory of men. While the Shakspeares and Miltons roll on like mighty rivers through the country of Thought, bearing fleets of traffickers and assiduous pearl-fishers on their waves; this little Valclusa Fountain will also arrest our eye: for this also is of Nature's own and most cunning workmanship, bursts from the depths of the earth, with a full gushing current, into the light of day; and often will the traveller turn aside to drink of its clear waters, and muse among its rocks and pines!

THE LIFE OF HEYNE.[1]

[1828.]

The labors and merits of Heyne being better known, and more justly appreciated in England, than those of almost any other German, whether scholar, poet or philosopher, we cannot but believe that some notice of his life may be acceptable to most readers. Accordingly, we here mean to give a short abstract of this Volume, a miniature copy of the "biographical portrait;" but must first say a few words on the portrait itself, and the limner by whom it was drawn.

Professor Heeren is a man of learning, and known far out of his own Hanoverian circle, — indeed, more or less to all students of history, — by his researches on Ancient Commerce, a voluminous account of which from his hand enjoys considerable reputation. He is evidently a man of sense and natural talent, as well as learning; and his gifts seem to lie round him in quiet arrangement, and very much at his own command. Nevertheless, we cannot admire him as a writer; we do not even reckon that such endowments as he has are adequately represented in his books. His style both of diction and thought is thin, cold, formal, without force or character, and painfully reminds us of college lectures. He can work rapidly, but with no freedom, and, as it were, only in one attitude, and at one sort of labor. Not that we particularly blame Professor Heeren for this, but that we think he might have been something better: these "fellows in buckram," very numerous in certain walks of literature, are an unfortunate rather than a guilty class of men; they have fallen, perhaps unwillingly, into the plan of writing by pattern, and can now do no other; for, in their minds, the beautiful comes at last to be simply synonymous with the neat. Every sentence bears a family-likeness to its precursor; most probably it has a set number of clauses (three is a favorite number, as in Gibbon, for "the Muses delight in odds"); has also a given rhythm, a known and foreseen music, simple but limited enough, like that of ill-bred fingers drumming on a table. And then it is strange how soon the outward rhythm carries the inward along with it; and the thought moves with the same stinted, hamstrung rub-a-dub as the words. In a state of perfection, this species of writing comes to resemble power-loom weaving; it is not the mind that is at work, but some scholastic machinery which the mind has of old constructed, and is from afar observing. Shot follows shot from the unwearied shuttle; and so the web is woven, ultimately and properly, indeed, by the wit of man, yet immediately and in the mean while by the mere aid of time and steam.

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[1] Foreign Review, No. 4. — *Christian Gottlob Heyne biographisch dargestellt von Arnold Hermann Ludwig Heeren.* (Christian Gottlob Heyne biographically portrayed by Arnold Hermann Ludwig Heeren.) Göttingen.

But our Professor's mode of speculation is little less intensely academic than his mode of writing. We fear he is something of what the Germans call a *Kleinstädter;* mentally as well as bodily, a "dweller in a little town." He speaks at great length, and with undue fondness, of the "Georgia Augusta;" which, after all, is but the University of Göttingen, an earthly and no celestial institution: it is nearly in vain that he tries to contemplate Heyne as a European personage, or even as a German one; beyond the precincts of the Georgia Augusta his view seems to grow feeble, and soon dies away into vague inanity; so we have not Heyne, the man and scholar, but Heyne the Göttingen Professor. But neither is this habit of mind any strange or crying sin, or at all peculiar to Göttingen; as, indeed, most parishes in England can produce more than one example to show. And yet it is pitiful, when an establishment for universal science, which ought to be a watch-tower where a man might see all the kingdoms of the world, converts itself into a workshop, whence he sees nothing but his tool-box and bench, and the world, in broken glimpses, through one patched and highly discolored pane!

Sometimes, indeed, our worthy friend rises into a region of the moral sublime, in which it is difficult for a foreigner to follow him. Thus he says, on one occasion, speaking of Heyne: "Immortal are his merits in regard to the catalogues" — of the Göttingen library. And, to cite no other instance except the last and best one, we are informed, that when Heyne died, "the guardian angels of the Georgia Augusta waited, in that higher world, to meet him with blessings." By Day and Night! there is no such guardian angel, that we know of, for the University of Göttingen; neither does it need one, being a good solid seminary of itself, with handsome stipends from Government. We had imagined too, that if anybody welcomed people into heaven, it would be St. Peter, or at least some angel of old standing, and not a mere mushroom, as this of Göttingen must be, created since the year 1739.

But we are growing very ungrateful to the good Heeren, who meant no harm by these flourishes of rhetoric, and indeed does not often indulge in them. The grand questions with us here are, Did he know the truth in this matter; and was he disposed to tell it honestly? To both of which questions we can answer without reserve, that all appearances are in his favor. He was Heyne's pupil, colleague, son-in-law, and so knew him intimately for thirty years: he has every feature also of a just, quiet, truth-loving man; so that we see little reason to doubt the authenticity, the innocence, of any statement in his Volume. What more have we to do with him, then, but to take thankfully what he has been pleased and able to give us, and, with all despatch, communicate it to our readers?

Heyne's Life is not without an intrinsic, as well as an external interest; for he had much to struggle with, and he struggled with it manfully; thus his history has a value independent of his fame. Some account of his early years we are happily enabled to give in his own words: we translate a considerable part of this passage; autobiography being a favorite sort of reading with us.

He was born at Chemnitz, in Upper Saxony, in September, 1729; the eldest of a poor weaver's family, poor almost to the verge of destitution.

"My good father, George Heyne," says he, "was a native of the principality of Glogau, in Silesia, from the little village of Gravenschütz. His youth had fallen in those times when the Evangelist party of that province were still exposed to the oppressions and persecutions of the Romish Church. His kindred, enjoying the blessing of contentment in a humble but independent station, felt, like others, the influence of this proselytizing bigotry, and lost their domestic peace by means of it. Some went over to the Romish faith. My father left his native village, and endeavored, by the labor of his hands, to procure a livelihood in Saxony. "What will it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul!" was the thought which the scenes of his youth had stamped the most deeply on his mind. But no lucky chance favored his enterprises or endeavors to better his condition never so little. On the contrary, a series of perverse incidents kept him continually below the limits even of a moderate sufficiency. His old age was thus left a prey to poverty, and to her companions, timidity and depression of mind. Manufactures, at that time, were visibly declining in Saxony; and the misery among the working-classes, in districts concerned in the linen trade, was unusually severe. Scarcely could the labor of the hands suffice to support the laborer himself, still less his family. The saddest aspect which the decay of civic society can exhibit has always appeared to me to be this, when honorable, honor-loving, conscientious diligence cannot, by the utmost efforts of toil, obtain the necessaries of life; or when the working man cannot even find work, but must stand with folded arms, lamenting his forced idleness, through which himself and his family are verging to starvation, or it may be, actually suffering the pains of hunger.

"It was in the extremest penury that I was born and brought up. The earliest companion of my childhood was Want; and my first impressions came from the tears of my mother, who had not bread for her children. How often have

I seen her on Saturday nights wringing her hands and weeping, when she had come back with what the hard toil, nay often the sleepless nights of her husband had produced, and could find none to buy it! Sometimes a fresh attempt was made through me or my sister: I had to return to the purchasers with the same piece of ware, to see whether we could not possibly get rid of it. In that quarter there is a class of so-called merchants, who, however, are in fact nothing more than forestallers, that buy up the linen made by the poorer people at the lowest price, and endeavor to sell it in other districts at the highest. Often have I seen one or other of these petty tyrants, with all the pride of a satrap, throw back the piece of goods offered him, or imperiously cut off some trifle from the price and wages required for it. Necessity constrained the poorer to sell the sweat of his brow at a *groschen* or two less, and again to make good the deficit by starving. It was the view of such things that awakened the first sparks of indignation in my young heart. The show of pomp and plenty among these purse-proud people, who fed themselves on the extorted crumbs of so many hundreds, far from dazzling me into respect or fear, filled me with rage against them. The first time I heard of tyrannicide at school, there rose vividly before me the project to become a Brutus on all those oppressors of the poor, who had so often cast my father and mother into straits: and here, for the first time, was an instance of a truth which I have since had frequent occasion to observe, that if the unhappy man, armed with feeling of his wrongs and a certain strength of soul, does not risk the utmost and become an open criminal, it is merely the beneficent result of those circumstances in which Providence has placed him, thereby fettering his activity, and guarding him from such destructive attempts. That the oppressing part of mankind should be secured against the oppressed was, in the plan of inscrutable Wisdom, a most important element of the present system of things.

"My good parents did what they could, and sent me to a child's-school in the suburbs. I obtained the praise of learning very fast, and being very fond of it. My schoolmaster had two sons, lately returned from Leipzig; a couple of depraved fellows, who took all pains to lead me astray; and, as I resisted, kept me for a long time, by threats and mistreatment of all sorts, extremely miserable. So early as my tenth year, to raise the money for my school-wages, I had given lessons to a neighbor's child, a little girl, in reading and writing. As the common school-course could take me no farther, the point now was to get a private hour and proceed into Latin. But for that purpose a *guter groschen* weekly was required; this my parents had not to give. Many a day I carried this grief about with me: however, I had a godfather, who was in easy circumstances, a baker, and my mother's half-brother. One Saturday I was sent to this man to fetch a loaf. With wet eyes I entered his house, and chanced to find my godfather himself there. Being questioned why I was crying, I tried to answer, but a whole stream of tears broke loose, and scarcely could I make the cause of my sorrow intelligible. My magnanimous godfather offered to pay the weekly *groschen* out of his own pocket; and only this condition was imposed on me, that I should come to him every Sunday, and repeat what part of the Gospel I had learned by heart. This latter arrangement had one good effect for me, — it exercised my memory, and I learned to recite without bashfulness.

"Drunk with joy, I started off with my loaf; tossing it up time after time into the air, and barefoot as I was, I capered aloft after it. But hereupon my loaf fell into a puddle. This misfortune again brought me a little to reason. My mother heartily rejoiced at the good news; my father was less content. Thus passed a couple of years; and my schoolmaster intimated, what I myself had long known, that I could now learn no more from him.

"This then was the time when I must leave school, and betake me to the handicraft of my father. Were not the artisan under oppressions of so many kinds, robbed of the fruits of his hard toil, and of so many advantages to which the useful citizen has a natural claim; I should still say, *Had* I but continued in the station of my parents, what thousand-fold vexation would at this hour have been unknown to me! My father could not but be anxious to have a grown-up son for an assistant in his labor, and looked upon my repugnance to it with great dislike. I again longed to get into the grammar-school of the town; but for this all means were wanting. Where was a *gulden* of quarterly fees, where were books and a blue cloak to be come at? How wistfully my look often hung on the walls of the school when I passed it!

"A clergyman of the suburbs was my second godfather; his name was Sebastian Seydel; my schoolmaster, who likewise belonged to his congregation, had told him of me. I was sent for, and after a short examination, he promised me that I should go to the town-school; he himself would bear the charges. Who can express my happiness, as I then felt it! I was despatched to the first teacher; examined, and placed with approbation in the second class. Weakly from the first, pressed down with sorrow and want, without any cheerful enjoyment of childhood or youth, I was still of very small stature; my class-fellows judged by externals, and had a very slight opinion of me. Scarcely, by various proofs of diligence and by the praises I received, could I get so far that they tolerated my being put beside them.

"And certainly my diligence was not a little hampered! Of his promise, the clergyman, indeed, kept so much, that he paid my quarterly fees, provided me with a coarse cloak, and gave me some useless volumes that were lying on his shelves; but to furnish me with school-books he could not resolve. I thus found myself under the necessity of borrowing a class-fellow's books, and daily copying a part of them before the lesson. On the other hand, the honest man would have some hand himself in my instruction, and gave me from time to time some hours in Latin. In his youth he had learned to make Latin verses: scarcely was *Erasmus de Civilitate Morum* got over, when I too must take to verse-making; all this before I had read any authors, or could possibly possess any store of words. The man was withal passionate and rigorous; in every point repulsive; with a moderate income he was accused of avarice; he had the stiffness and self-will of an old bachelor, and at the same time the vanity of aiming to be a good Latinist, and, what was more, a Latin verse-maker, and consequently a literary clergyman. These qualities of his all contributed to overload my youth, and nip away in the bud every enjoyment of its pleasures."

In this plain but somewhat leaden style does Heyne proceed, detailing the crosses and losses of his school-years. We cannot pretend that the narrative delights us much; nay, that it is not rather bald and barren for such a narrative; but its fidelity may be relied on; and it paints the clear, broad, strong and somewhat heavy nature of the writer, perhaps better than description could do. It is curious, for instance, to see with how little of a purely humane interest he looks back to his childhood; how Heyne the man has almost grown into a sort of teaching-machine, and sees in Heyne the boy little else than the incipient Gerund-grinder, and tells us little else but how this wheel after the other was developed in him, and he came at last to grind in complete perfection. We could have wished to get some view into the interior of that poor Chemnitz hovel, with its unresting loom and cheerless hearth, its squalor and devotion, its affection and repining; and the fire of natural genius struggling into flame amid such incumbrances, in an atmosphere so damp and close! But of all this we catch few farther glimpses; and hear only of Fabricius and Owen and Pasor, and school-examinations, and rectors that had been taught by Ernesti. Neither, in another respect, not of omission but of commission, can this piece of writing altogether content us. We must object a little to the spirit of it, as too narrow, too intolerant. Sebastian Seydel must have been a very meagre man; but is it right that Heyne, of all others, should speak of him with asperity? Without question the unfortunate Seydel meant nobly, had not thrift stood in his way. Did not he pay down his *gulden* every quarter regularly, and give the boy a blue cloak, though a coarse one? Nay, he bestowed old books on him, and instruction, according to his gift, in the mystery of verse-making. And was not all this something? And if thrift and charity had a continual battle to fight, was not that better than a flat surrender on the part of the latter? The other pastors of Chemnitz are all quietly forgotten: why should Sebastian be remembered to his disadvantage for being only a little better than they?

Heyne continued to be much infested with tasks from Sebastian, and sorely held down by want, and discouragement of every sort. The school-course moreover, he says, was bad; nothing but the old routine; vocables, translations, exercises; all without spirit or purpose. Nevertheless, he continued to make what we must call wonderful proficiency in these branches; especially as he had still to write every task before he could learn it. For he prepared "Greek versions," he says, "also Greek verses; and by and by could write down in Greek prose, and at last in Greek as well as Latin verses, the discourses he heard in church!" Some ray of hope was beginning to spring up within his mind. A certain small degree of self-confidence had first been awakened in him, as he informs us, by a "pedantic adventure:" —

"There chanced to be a school-examination held, at which the Superintendent, as chief school-inspector, was present. This man, Dr. Theodor Krüger, a theologian of some learning for his time, all at once interrupted the rector, who was teaching *ex cathedra*, and put the question: Who among the scholars could tell him what might be made *per anagramma* from the word *Austria?* This whim had arisen from the circumstance that the first Silesian war was just begun; and some such anagram, reckoned very happy, had appeared in a newspaper.[1] No one of us knew so much as what an anagram was; even the rector looked quite perplexed. As none answered, the latter began to give us a description of anagrams in general. I set myself to work, and sprang forth with my discovery: *Vastari!* This was something different from the newspaper one: so much the greater was our Superintendent's admiration; and the more, as the successful aspirant was a little boy, on the lowest bench of the *secunda.* He growled out his applause to me; but at the same time set the whole school about my ears, as he stoutly upbraided them with being beaten by an *infimus*.

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[1] "As yet Saxony was against Austria, not, as in the end, allied with her."

"Enough: this pedantic adventure gave the first impulse to the development of my powers. I began to take some credit to myself, and in spite of all the oppression and contempt in which I languished, to resolve on struggling forward. This first struggle was in truth ineffectual enough; was soon regarded as a piece of pride and conceitedness; it brought on me a thousand humiliations and disquietudes; at times it might degenerate on my part into defiance. Nevertheless, it kept me at the stretch of my diligence, ill-guided as it was, and withdrew me from the company of my class-fellows, among whom, as among children of low birth and bad nurture could not fail to be the case, the utmost coarseness and boorishness of every sort prevailed. The plan of these schools does not include any general inspection, but limits itself to mere intellectual instruction.

"Yet on all hands," continues he, "I found myself too sadly hampered. The perverse way in which the old parson treated me; at home the discontent and grudging of my parents, especially of my father, who could not get on with his work, and still thought that, had I kept by his way of life, he might now have had some help; the pressure of want, the feeling of being behind every other; all this would allow no cheerful thought, no sentiment of worth to spring up within me. A timorous, bashful, awkward carriage shut me out still farther from all exterior attractions. Where could I learn good manners, elegance, a right way of thought? Where could I attain any culture for heart and spirit?

"Upwards, however, I still strove. A feeling of honor, a wish for something better, an effort to work myself out of this abasement, incessantly attended me; but without direction as it was, it led me rather to sullenness, misanthropy and clownishness.

"At length a place opened for me, where some training in these points lay within my reach. One of our senators took his mother-in-law home to live with him; she had still two children with her, a son and a daughter, both about my own age. For the son private lessons were wanted; and happily I was chosen for the purpose.

"As these private lessons brought me in a *gulden* monthly, I now began to defend myself a little against the grumbling of my parents. Hitherto I had been in the habit of doing work occasionally, that I might not be told how I was eating their bread for nothing; clothes, and oil for my lamp, I had earned by teaching in the house: these things I could now relinquish; and thus my condition was in some degree improved. On the other hand, I had now opportunity of seeing persons of better education. I gained the good-will of the family; so that besides the lesson-hours, I generally lived there. Such society afforded me some culture, extended my conceptions and opinions, and also polished a little the rudeness of my exterior."

In this senatorial house he must have been somewhat more at ease; for he now very privately fell in love with his pupil's sister, and made and burnt many Greek and Latin verses in her praise; and had sweet dreams of some time rising "so high as to be worthy of her." Even as matters stood, he acquired her friendship and that of her mother. But the grand concern, for the present, was how to get to college at Leipzig. Old Sebastian had promised to stand good on this occasion; and unquestionably would have done so with the greatest pleasure, had it cost him nothing: but he promised and promised, without doing aught; above all, without putting his hand into his pocket; and elsewhere there was no help or resource. At length, wearied perhaps with the boy's importunity, he determined to bestir himself; and so directed his assistant, who was just making a journey to Leipzig, to show Heyne the road: the two arrived in perfect safety; Heyne still longing after cash, for of his own he had only two *gulden*, about five shillings; but the assistant left him in a lodging-house, and went his way, saying he had no farther orders!

The miseries of a poor scholar's life were now to be Heyne's portion in full measure. Ill-clothed, totally destitute of books, with five shillings in his purse, he found himself set down in the Leipzig University, to study all learning. Despondency at first overmastered the poor boy's heart, and he sank into sickness, from which indeed he recovered; but only, he says, "to fall into conditions of life where he became the prey of desperation." How he contrived to exist, much more to study, is scarcely apparent from this narrative. The unhappy old Sebastian did at length send him some pittance, and at rare intervals repeated the dole; yet ever with his own peculiar grace; not till after unspeakable solicitations; in quantities that were consumed by inextinguishable debt, and coupled with sour admonitions; nay, on one occasion, addressed externally, "*À Mr. Heyne,* ETUDIANT NÉGLIGENT." For half a year he would leave him without all help; then promise to come and see what he was doing; come accordingly, and return without leaving him a penny: neither could the destitute youth ever obtain any public furtherance; no *freitisch* (free-table) or *stipendium* was to be procured. Many times he had no regular meal; "often not three halfpence for a loaf at midday." He longed to be dead, for his spirit was often sunk in the gloom of darkness. "One good heart alone," says he, "I found, and that in the servant-girl of the house where I lodged. She laid out money for my most pressing necessities, and risked almost all she had, seeing me in such frightful want. Could I but find thee in the world even now, thou good pious soul, that I might repay thee what thou then didst for me!"

Heyne declares it to be still a mystery to him how he stood all this. "What carried me forward," continues he, "was not ambition; any youthful dream of one day taking a place, or aiming to take one, among the learned. It is true, the bitter feeling of debasement, of deficiency in education and external polish, the consciousness of awkwardness in social life, incessantly accompanied me. But my chief strength lay in a certain defiance of Fate. This gave me courage not to yield; everywhere to try to the uttermost whether I was doomed without remedy never to rise from this degradation."

Of order in his studies there could be little expectation. He did not even know what profession he was aiming after: Sebastian was for theology; and Heyne, though himself averse to it, affected and only affected to comply: besides he had no money to pay class fees; it was only to open lectures, or at most to ill-guarded class-rooms, that he could gain admission. Of this ill-guarded sort was Winkler's; into which poor Heyne insinuated himself to hear philosophy. Alas, the first problem of all philosophy, the keeping of soul and body together, was well-nigh too hard for him! Winkler's students were of a riotous description; accustomed, among other improprieties, to *scharren,* scraping with the feet. One day they chose to receive Heyne in this fashion; and he could not venture back. "Nevertheless," adds he, simply enough, "the beadle came to me some time afterwards, demanding the fee: I had my own shifts to take before I could raise it."

Ernesti was the only teacher from whom he derived any benefit; the man, indeed, whose influence seems to have shaped the whole subsequent course of his studies. By dint of excessive endeavors he gained admittance to Ernesti's lectures; and here first learned, says Heeren, "what interpretation of the classics meant." One Crist also, a strange, fantastic Sir Plume of a Professor, who built much on taste, elegance of manners and the like, took some notice of him, and procured him a little employment as a private teacher. This might be more useful than his advice to imitate Scaliger, and read the ancients so as to begin with the most ancient, and proceed regularly to the latest. Small service it can do a bedrid man to convince him that waltzing is preferable to quadrilles! "Crist's Lectures," says he, "were a tissue of endless digressions, which, however, now and then contained excellent remarks."

But Heyne's best teacher was himself. No pressure of distresses, no want of books, advisers or encouragement, not hunger itself could abate his resolute perseverance. What books he could come at he borrowed; and such was his excess of zeal in reading, that for a whole half-year he allowed himself only two nights of sleep in the week, till at last a fever obliged him to be more moderate. His diligence was undirected, or ill-directed, but it never rested, never paused, and must at length prevail. Fortune had cast him into a cavern, and he was groping darkly round; but the prisoner was a giant, and would at length burst forth as a giant into the light of day. Heyne, without any clear aim, almost without any hope, had set his heart on attaining knowledge; a force, as of instinct, drove him on, and no promise and no threat could turn him back. It was at the very depth of his destitution, when he had not "three *groschen* for a loaf to dine on," that he refused a tutorship, with handsome enough appointments, but which was to have removed him from the University. Crist had sent for him one Sunday, and made him the proposal: "There arose a violent struggle within me," says he, "which drove me to and fro for several days; to this hour it is incomprehensible to me where I found resolution to determine on renouncing the offer, and pursuing my object in Leipzig." A man with a half volition goes backwards and forwards, and makes no way on the smoothest road; a man with a whole volition advances on the roughest, and will reach his purpose if there be even a little wisdom in it.

With his first two years' residence in Leipzig, Heyne's personal narrative terminates; not because the nodus of the history had been solved then, and his perplexities cleared up, but simply because he had not found time to relate farther. A long series of straitened hopeless days were yet appointed him. By Ernesti's or Crist's recommendation, he occasionally got employment in giving private lessons; at one time, he worked as secretary and classical hodman to "Crusius, the philosopher," who felt a little rusted in his Greek and Latin; everywhere he found the scantiest accommodation, and shifting from side to side in dreary vicissitude of want, had to spin out an existence, warmed by no ray of comfort, except the fire that burnt or smouldered unquenchably within his own bosom. However, he had now chosen a profession, that of law, at which, as at many other branches of learning, he was laboring with his old diligence. Of preferment in this province there was, for the present, little or no hope; but this was no new thing with Heyne. By degrees, too, his fine talents and endeavors, and his perverse situation, began to attract notice and sympathy; and here and there some well-wisher had his eye on him, and stood ready to do him a service. Two-and-twenty years of penury and joyless struggling had now passed over the man; how many more such might be added was still uncertain; yet surely the longest winter is followed by a spring.

Another trifling incident, little better than that old "pedantic adventure," again brought about important changes in Heyne's situation. Among his favorers in Leipzig had been the preacher of a French chapel, one Lacoste, who, at this time, was cut off by death. Heyne, it is said, in the real sorrow of his heart, composed a long Latin Epicedium on that occasion: the poem had nowise been intended for the press; but certain hearers of the deceased were so pleased with it, that they had it printed, and this in the finest style of typography and decoration. It was this latter circumstance, not the merit of the verses, which is said to have been considerable, that attracted the attention of Count Brühl, the well-known prime minister and favorite of the Elector. Brühl's sons were studying in Leipzig; he was pleased to express himself contented with the poem, and to say that he should like to have the author in his service. A prime minister's words are not as water spilt upon the ground, which cannot be gathered; but rather as heavenly manna, which is treasured up and eaten, not without a religious sentiment. Heyne was forthwith written to from all quarters, that his fortune was made: he had but to show himself in Dresden, said his friends with one voice, and golden showers from the ministerial cornucopia would refresh him almost to saturation. For, was not the Count taken with him; and who in all Saxony, not excepting Serene Highness itself, could gainsay the Count? Over-persuaded, and against his will, Heyne at length determined on the journey; for which, as an indispensable preliminary, "fifty-one *thalers*" had to be borrowed; and so, following this hopeful quest, he actually arrived at Dresden in April, 1752. Count Brühl received him with the most captivating smiles; and even assured him in words, that he, Count Brühl, would take care of him. But a prime minister has so much to take care of! Heyne danced attendance all spring and summer; happier than our Johnson, inasmuch as he had not to "blow his fingers in a cold lobby," the weather being warm; and obtained not only promises, but useful experience of their value at courts.

He was to be made a secretary, with five hundred, with four hundred, or even with three hundred *thalers*, of income: only, in the mean while, his old stock of fifty-one had quite run out, and he had nothing to live upon. By great good luck, he procured some employment in his old craft, private teaching, which helped him through the winter; but as this ceased, he remained without resources. He tried working for the booksellers, and translated a French romance, and a Greek one, "Chariton's *Loves of Chareas and Callirhoe:*" however, his emoluments would scarcely furnish him with salt, not to speak of victuals. He sold his few books. A licentiate in divinity, one Sonntag, took pity on his houselessness, and shared a garret with him; where, as there was no unoccupied bed, Heyne slept on the floor, with a few folios for his pillow. So fared he as to lodging: in regard to board, he gathered empty pease-cods, and had them boiled; this was not unfrequently his only meal. — O ye poor naked wretches! what would Bishop Watson say to this? — At length, by dint of incredible solicitations, Heyne, in the autumn of 1753, obtained, not his secretaryship, but the post of under-clerk (*copist*) in the Brühl Library, with one hundred *thalers* of salary; a sum barely sufficient to keep in life, which, indeed, was now a great point with him. In such sort was this young scholar "taken care of."

Nevertheless, it was under these external circumstances that he first entered on his proper career, and forcibly made a place for himself among the learned men of his day. In 1754 he prepared his edition of Tibullus, which was printed next year at Leipzig;[1] a work said to exhibit remarkable talent, inasmuch as "the rudiments of all those excellences, by which Heyne afterwards became distinguished as a commentator on the Classics, are more or less apparent in it." The most illustrious Henry Count von Brühl, in spite of the dedication, paid no regard to this Tibullus; as indeed Germany at large paid little: but, in another country, it fell into the hands of Rhunken, where it was rightly estimated, and lay waiting, as in due season appeared, to be the pledge of better fortune for its author.

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[1] *Albii Tibulli quæ extant Carmina, novis curis castigata. Illustrissimo Domino Henrico Comiti de Brühl inscripta.* Lipsiæ, 1755.

Meanwhile the day of difficulty for Heyne was yet far from past. The profits of his Tibullus served to cancel some debts; on the strength of the hundred *thalers*, the spindle of Clotho might still keep turning, though languidly; but, ere long, new troubles arose. His superior in the Library was one Rost, a poetaster, atheist, and gold-maker, who corrupted his religious principles, and plagued him with caprices: over the former evil Heyne at length triumphed, and became a rational Christian; but the latter was an abiding grievance: not, indeed, forever, for it was removed by a greater. In 1756 the Seven-Years War broke out; Frederick advanced towards Dresden, animated with especial fury against Brühl; whose palaces accordingly in a few months were reduced to ashes, as his 70,000 splendid volumes were annihilated by fire and by water,[1] and all his domestics and dependents turned to the street without appeal.

Heyne had lately been engaged in studying Epictetus, and publishing, *ad fidem Codd. Mnspt.*, an edition of his Enchiridion;[2] from which, quoth Heeren, his great soul had acquired much stoical nourishment. Such nourishment never comes wrong in life; and, surely, at this time Heyne had need of it all. However, he struggled as he had been wont: translated pamphlets, sometimes wrote newspaper articles; eat when he had wherewithal, and resolutely endured when he had not. By and by, Rabener, to whom he was a little known, offered him a tutorship in the family of a Herr von Schönberg; which Heyne, not without reluctance, accepted. Tutorships were at all times his aversion: his rugged plebeian proud spirit made business of that sort grievous: but Want stood over him, like an armed man, and was not to be reasoned with.

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[1] One rich cargo, on its way to Hamburg, sank in the Elbe; another still more valuable portion had been, for safety, deposited in a vault; through which passed certain pipes of artificial water-works; these the cannon broke, and when the vault came to be opened, all was reduced to pulp and mould. The bomb-shells burnt the remainder.

[2] Lipsiæ, 1756. The *Codices*, or rather the *Codex*, was in Brühl's Library.

In this Schönberg family, a novel and unexpected series of fortunes awaited him; but whether for weal or for woe might still be hard to determine. The name of Theresa Weiss has become a sort of classical word in biography; her union with Heyne forms, as it were, a green cypress-and-myrtle oasis in his otherwise hard and stony history. It was here that he first met with her; that they learned to love each other. She was the orphan of a "professor on the lute;" had long, amid poverty and afflictions, been trained, like the stoics, to bear and forbear; was now in her twenty-seventh year, and the humble companion, as she had once been the schoolmate, of the Frau von Schönberg, whose young brother Heyne had come to teach. Their first interview may be described in his own words, which Heeren is here again happily enabled to introduce: —

"It was on the 10th of October (her future death-day!) that I first entered the Schönberg house. Towards what mountains of mischances was I now proceeding! To what endless tissues of good and evil hap was the thread here taken up! Could I fancy that, at this moment, Providence was deciding the fortune of my life! I was ushered into a room, where sat several ladies engaged, with gay youthful sportiveness, in friendly confidential talk. Frau von Schönberg, but lately married, yet at this time distant from her husband, was preparing for a journey to him at Prague, where his business detained him. On her brow still beamed the pure innocence of youth; in her eyes you saw a glad soft vernal sky; a smiling loving complaisance accompanied her discourse. This too seemed one of those souls, clear and uncontaminated as they come from the hands of their Maker. By reason of her brother, in her tender love of him, I must have been to her no unimportant guest.

"Beside her stood a young lady, dignified in aspect, of fair, slender shape, not regular in feature, yet soul in every glance. Her words, her looks, her every movement, impressed you with respect; another sort of respect than what is paid to rank and birth. Good sense, good feeling disclosed itself in all she did. You forgot that more beauty, more softness, might have been demanded; you felt yourself under the influence of something noble, something stately and earnest, something decisive that lay in her look, in her gestures; not less attracted to her than compelled to reverence her.

"More than esteem the first sight of Theresa did not inspire me with. What I noticed most were the efforts she made to relieve my embarrassment, the fruit of my down-bent pride, and to keep me, a stranger, entering among familiar acquaintances, in easy conversation. Her good heart reminded her how much the unfortunate requires encouragement; especially when placed, as I was, among those to whose protection he must look up. Thus was my first kindness for her awakened by that good-heartedness, which made her among thousands a beneficent angel. She was one at this moment to myself; for I twice received letters from an unknown hand, containing money, which greatly alleviated my difficulties.

"In a few days, on the 14th of October, I commenced my task of instruction. Her I did not see again till the following spring, when she returned with her friend from Prague; and then only once or twice, as she soon accompanied Frau von Schönberg to the country, to Ænsdorf in Oberlausitz (Upper Lusatia). They left us, after it had been settled that I was to follow them in a few days with my pupil. My young heart joyed in the prospect of rural pleasures, of which I had, from of old, cherished a thousand delightful dreams. I still remember the 6th of May, when we set out for Ænsdorf.

"The society of two cultivated females, who belonged to the noblest of their sex, and the endeavor to acquire their esteem, contributed to form my own character. Nature and religion were the objects of my daily contemplation; I began to act and live on principles, of which, till now, I had never thought: these too formed the subject of our constant discourse. Lovely

Nature and solitude exalted our feelings to a pitch of pious enthusiasm.

"Sooner than I, Theresa discovered that her friendship for me was growing into a passion. Her natural melancholy now seized her heart more keenly than ever: often our glad hours were changed into very gloomy and sad ones. Whenever our conversation chanced to turn on religion (she was of the Roman Catholic faith), I observed that her grief became more apparent. I noticed her redouble her devotions; and sometimes found her in solitude weeping and praying with such a fulness of heart as I had never seen."

Theresa and her lover, or at least beloved, were soon separated, and for a long while kept much asunder; partly by domestic arrangements, still more by the tumults of war. Heyne attended his pupil to the Wittenberg University, and lived there a year; studying for his own behoof, chiefly in philosophy and German history, and with more profit, as he says, than of old. Theresa and he kept up a correspondence, which often passed into melancholy and enthusiasm. The Prussian cannon drove him out of Wittenberg: his pupil and he witnessed the bombardment of the place from the neighborhood; and, having waited till their University became "a heap of rubbish," had to retire else-whither for accommodation. The young man subsequently went to Erlangen, then to Göttingen. Heyne remained again without employment, alone in Dresden. Theresa was living in his neighborhood, lovely and sad as ever; but a new bombardment drove her also to a distance. She left her little property with Heyne; who removed it to his lodging, and determined to abide the Prussian siege, having indeed no other resource. The sack of cities looks so well on paper, that we must find a little space here for Heyne's account of his experience in this business; though it is none of the brightest accounts; and indeed contrasts but poorly with Rabener's brisk sarcastic narrative of the same adventure; for he too was cannonaded out of Dresden at this time, and lost house and home, and books and manuscripts, and all but good humor.

"The Prussians advanced meanwhile, and on the 18th of

July (1760) the bombardment of Dresden began. Several nights I passed, in company with others, in a tavern, and the days in my room; so that I could hear the balls from the battery, as they flew through the streets, whizzing past my windows. An indifference to danger and to life took such possession of me, that on the last morning of the siege, I went early to bed, and, amid the frightfulest crashing of bombs and grenades, fell fast asleep of fatigue, and lay sound till midday. On awakening, I huddled on my clothes, and ran downstairs, but found the whole house deserted. I had returned to my room, considering what I was to do, whither, at all events, I was to take my chest, when, with a tremendous crash, a bomb came down in the court of the house; did not, indeed, set fire to it, but on all sides shattered everything to pieces. The thought, that where one bomb fell, more would soon follow, gave me wings; I darted downstairs, found the house-door locked, ran to and fro; at last got entrance into one of the under rooms, and sprang through the window into the street.

"Empty as the street where I lived had been, I found the principal thoroughfares crowded with fugitives. Amidst the whistling of balls, I ran along the Schlossgasse towards the Elbe-Bridge, and so forward to the Neustadt, out of which the Prussians had now been forced to retreat. Glad that I had leave to rest anywhere, I passed one part of the night on the floor of an empty house; the other, witnessing the frightful light of flying bombs and a burning city.

"At break of day, a little postern was opened by the Austrian guard, to let the fugitives get out of the walls. The captain, in his insolence, called the people Lutheran dogs, and with this nickname gave each of us a stroke as we passed through the gate.

"I was now at large; and the thought, Whither bound? began for the first time to employ me. As I had run, indeed leapt from my house, in the night of terror, I had carried with me no particle of my property, and not a *groschen* of money. Only in hurrying along the street, I had chanced to see a tavern open; it was an Italian's, where I used to pass the nights. Here espying a fur cloak, I had picked it up, and thrown it about me. With this I walked along, in one of the sultriest days, from the Neustadt, over the sand and the moor, and took the road for Ænsdorf, where Theresa with her friend was staying; the mother-in-law of the latter being also on a visit to them. In the fiercest heat of the sun, through tracts of country silent and deserted, I walked four leagues to Bischofswerda, where I had to sleep in an inn among carriers. Towards midnight arrived a postilion with return-horses; I asked him to let me ride one; and with him I proceeded, till my road turned off from the highway. All day, I heard the shots at poor Dresden re-echoing in the hills.

"Curiosity at first made my reception at Ænsdorf very warm. But as I came to appear in the character of an altogether destitute man, the family could see in me only a future burden: no invitation to continue with them followed. In a few days came a chance of conveyance, by a wagon for Neustadt, to a certain Frau von Fletscher's a few miles on this side of it; I was favored with some old linen for the road. The good Theresa suffered unspeakably under these proceedings: the noble lady, her friend, had not been allowed to act according to the dictates of her own heart.

"Not till now did I feel wholly how miserable I was. Spurning at destiny, and hardening my heart, I entered on this journey. With the Frau von Fletscher too my abode was brief; and by the first opportunity I returned to Dresden. There was still a possibility that my lodging might have been saved. With heavy heart I entered the city; hastened to the place where I had lived, and found — a heap of ashes."

Heyne took up his quarters in the vacant rooms of the Brühl Library. Some friends endeavored to alleviate his distress; but war and rumors of war continued to harass him, and drive him to and fro; and his Theresa, afterwards also a fugitive, was now as poor as himself. She heeded little the loss of her property; but inward sorrow and so many outward agitations preyed hard upon her; in the winter she fell violently sick at Dresden, was given up by her physicians; received extreme unction according to the rites of her church;

and was for some hours believed to be dead. Nature, however, again prevailed: a crisis had occurred in the mind as well as in the body; for with her first returning strength, Theresa declared her determination to renounce the Catholic, and publicly embrace the Protestant faith. Argument, representation of worldly disgrace and loss were unavailing: she could now, that all her friends were to be estranged, have little hope of being wedded to Heyne on earth; but she trusted that in another scene a like creed might unite them in a like destiny. He himself fell ill; and only escaped death by her nursing. Persisting the more in her purpose, she took priestly instruction, and on the 30th of May, in the Evangelical Schlosskirche, solemnly professed her new creed.

"Reverent admiration filled me," says he, "as I beheld the peace and steadfastness with which she executed her determination; and still more the courage with which she bore the consequences of it. She saw herself altogether cast out from her family; forsaken by her acquaintance, by every one; and by the fire deprived of all she had. Her courage exalted me to a higher duty, and admonished me to do mine. Imprudently I had, in former conversations, first awakened her religious scruples; the passion for me, which had so much increased her enthusiasm, increased her melancholy; even the secret thought of belonging more closely to me by sameness of belief had unconsciously influenced her. In a word, I formed the determination which could not but expose me to universal censure: helpless as I was, I united my destiny with hers. We were wedded at Ænsdorf, on the 4th of June, 1761."

This was a bold step, but a right one: Theresa had now no stay but him; it behooved them to struggle, and if better might not be, to sink together. Theresa, in this narrative, appears to us a noble, interesting being; noble not in sentiment only, but in action and suffering; a fair flower trodden down by misfortune, but yielding, like flowers, only the sweeter perfume for being crushed, and which it would have been a blessedness to raise up and cherish into free growth. Yet, in plain prose, we must question whether the two were happier than others in their union: both were quick of temper; she was all a heavenly light, he in good part a hard terrestrial mass, which perhaps she could never wholly illuminate; the balance of the love seems to have lain much on her side. Nevertheless Heyne was a steadfast, true and kindly, if no ethereal man; he seems to have loved his wife honestly; and so, amid light and shadow, they made their pilgrimage together, if not better than other mortals, not worse, which was to have been feared.

Neither, for the present, did the pressure of distress weigh heavier on either than it had done before. He worked diligently, as he found scope, for his old Mæcenases, the Booksellers; the war-clouds grew lighter, or at least the young pair better used to them; friends also were kind, often assisting and hospitably entertaining them. On occasion of one such visit to the family of a Herr von Löben, there occurred a little trait, which for the sake of Theresa must not be omitted. Heyne and she had spent some happy weeks with their infant, in this country-house, when the alarm of war drove the Von Löbens from their residence, which with the management of its concerns they left to Heyne. He says, he gained some notion of "land-economy" hereby; and Heeren states that he had "a candle-manufactory" to oversee. But to our incident: —

"Soon after the departure of the family, there came upon us an irruption of Cossacks, — disguised Prussians, as we subsequently learned. After drinking to intoxication in the cellars, they set about plundering. Pursued by them, I ran upstairs, and no door being open but that of the room where my wife was with her infant, I rushed into it. She arose courageously, and placed herself, with the child on her arm, in the door against the robbers. This courage saved me, and the treasure which lay hidden in the chamber."

"O thou lioness!" said Attila Schmelzle, on occasion of a similar rescue, "why hast thou never been in any deadly peril, that I might show thee the lion in thy husband?"

But better days were dawning. "On our return to Dresden," says Heyne, "I learned that inquiries had been made after me from Hanover; I knew not for what reason." The reason by and by came to light. Gessner, Professor of Eloquence in Göttingen, was dead; and a successor was wanted. These things, it would appear, cause difficulties in Hanover, which in many other places are little felt. But the Prime Minister Münchhausen had as good as founded the Georgia Augusta himself; and he was wont to watch over it with singular anxiety. The noted and notorious Klotz was already there, as assistant to Gessner; "but his beautiful latinity," says Heeren, "did not dazzle Münchhausen; Klotz, with his pugnacity, was not thought of." The Minister applied to Ernesti for advice: Ernesti knew of no fit man in Germany; but recommended Rhunken of Leyden, or Saxe of Utrecht. Rhunken refused to leave his country, and added these words: "But why do you seek out of Germany, what Germany itself offers you? Why not, for Gessner's successor, take Christian Gottlob Heyne, that true pupil of Ernesti, and man of fine talent (*excellenti virum ingenio*), who has shown how much he knows of Latin literature by his Tibullus; of Greek, by his Epictetus? In my opinion, and that of the greatest Hemsterhuis (*Hemsterhusii τοῦ πάνυ*), Heyne is the only one that can replace your Gessner. Nor let any one tell me that Heyne's fame is not sufficiently illustrious and extended. Believe me, there is in this man such a richness of genius and learning, that ere long all Europe will ring with his praises."

This courageous and generous verdict of Rhunken's, in favor of a person as yet little known to the world, and to him known only by his writings, decided the matter. "Münchhausen," says our Heeren, "believed in the boldly prophesying man." Not without difficulty Heyne was unearthed; and after various excuses on account of competence on his part, — for he had lost all his books and papers in the siege of Dresden, and sadly forgotten his Latin and Greek in so many tumults, — and various prudential negotiations about dismission from the Saxon service, and salary and privilege in the Hanoverian, he at length formally received his appointment; and some three months after, in June, 1763, settled in Göttingen, with an official income of eight hundred *thalers;* which, it appears, was by several additions, in the course of time, increased to twelve hundred.

Here then had Heyne at last got to land. His long life was henceforth as quiet, and fruitful in activity and comfort, as the past period of it had been desolate and full of sorrows. He never left Göttingen, though frequently invited to do so, and sometimes with highly tempting offers;[1] but continued in his place, busy in his vocation; growing in influence, in extent of connection at home and abroad; till Rhunken's prediction might almost be reckoned fulfilled to the letter; for Heyne in his own department was without any equal in Europe.

However, his history from this point, even because it was so happy for himself, must lose most of its interest for the general reader. Heyne has now become a Professor, and a regularly progressive man of learning; has a fixed household, has rents and comings in; it is easy to fancy how that man might flourish in calm sunshine of prosperity, whom in adversity we saw growing in spite of every storm. Of his proceedings in Göttingen, his reform of the Royal Society of Sciences, his editing of the *Gelehrte Anzeigen* (Gazette of Learning), his exposition of the Classics from Virgil to Pindar, his remodelling of the Library, his passive quarrels with Voss, his armed neutrality with Michaelis; of all this we must say little. The best fruit of his endeavors lies before the world, in a long series of Works, which among us, as well as elsewhere, are known and justly appreciated. On looking over them, the first thing that strikes us is astonishment at Heyne's diligence; which, considering the quantity and quality of his writings, might have appeared singular even in one who had been without other duties. Yet Heyne's office involved him in the most laborious researches: he wrote letters by the hundred to all parts of the world, and on all conceivable subjects; he had three classes to teach daily; he appointed professors, for his recommendation was all-powerful; superintended schools; for a long time the inspection of the *Freitische* was laid on him, and he had cooks' bills to settle, and hungry students to satisfy with his purveyance. Besides all which, he accomplished, in the way of publication, as follows: —

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[1] He was invited successively to be Professor at Cassel, and at Klosterbergen; to be Librarian at Dresden; and, most flattering of all, to be *Prokanzler* in the University of Copenhagen, and virtual Director of Education over all Denmark. He had a struggle on this last occasion, but the Georgia Augusta again prevailed. Some increase of salary usually follows such refusals; it did not in this instance.

In addition to his *Tibullus* and *Epictetus*, the first of which went through three, the second through two editions, each time with large extensions and improvements: —

His Virgil (P. VIRGILIUS MARO *Varietate Lectionis et perpetuâ Annotatione illustratus*), in various forms, from 1767 to 1803; no fewer than six editions.

His Pliny (*Ex* C. PLINII SECUNDI *Historiâ Naturali excerpta, quæ ad Artes spectant*); two editions, 1790, 1811.

His Apollodorus (APOLLODORI *Atheniensis Bibliothecæ Libri tres*, &c.); two editions, 1787, 1803.

His Pindar (PINDARI *Carmina, cum Lectionis Varietate, curavit* Ch. G. H.); three editions, 1774, 1797, 1798, the last with the Scholia, the Fragments, a Translation, and Hermann's Inq. *De Metris.*

His Conon and Parthenius (CONONIS *Narrationes, et* PARTHENII *Narrationes amatoriæ*), 1798.

And lastly his Homer (HOMERI *Ilias, cum brevi Annotatione*); 8 volumes, 1802; and a second, contracted edition, in 2 volumes, 1804.

Next, almost a cart-load of Translations; of which we shall mention only his version, said to be with very important improvements, of our *Universal History* by Guthrie and Gray.

Then some ten or twelve thick volumes of Prolusions, Eulogies, Essays; treating of all subjects, from the French Directorate to the *Chest of Cypselus.* Of these, Six Volumes are known in a separate shape, under the title of *Opuscula;* and contain some of Heyne's most valuable writings.

And lastly, to crown the whole with one most surprising item, seven thousand five hundred (Heeren says from seven to eight thousand) Reviews of Books, in the Göttingen *Gelehrte Anzeigen.* Shame on us degenerate Editors! Here of itself was work for a lifetime!

To expect that elegance of composition should prevail in these multifarious performances were unreasonable enough.

Heyne wrote very indifferent German; and his Latin, by much the more common vehicle in his learned works, flowed from him with a copiousness which could not be Ciceronian. At the same time, these volumes are not the folios of a Montfaucon, not mere classical ore and slag, but regularly smelted metal; for most part exhibiting the essence, and only the essence, of very great research; and enlightened by a philosophy which, if it does not always wisely order its results, has looked far and deeply in collecting them.

To have performed so much, evinces on the part of Heyne no little mastership in the great art of husbanding time. Heeren gives us sufficient details on this subject; explains Heyne's adjustment of his hours and various occupations: how he rose at five o'clock, and worked all the day, and all the year, with the regularity of a steeple clock; nevertheless, how patiently he submitted to interruptions from strangers, or extraneous business; how briefly, yet smoothly, he contrived to despatch such interruptions; how his letters were indorsed when they came to hand; and lay in a special drawer till they were answered: nay we have a description of his whole "locality," his bureau and book-shelves and portfolios, his very bed and strong-box are not forgotten. To the busy man, especially the busy man of letters, these details are far from uninteresting; if we judged by the result, many of Heyne's arrangements might seem worthy not of notice only, but of imitation.

His domestic circumstances continued, on the whole, highly favorable for such activity; though not now more than formerly were they exempted from the common lot; but still had several hard changes to encounter. In 1775 he lost his Theresa, after long ill-health; an event which, stoic as he was, struck heavily and dolefully on his heart. He forbore not to shed some natural tears, though from eyes little used to the melting mood. Nine days after her death, he thus writes to a friend, with a solemn mournful tenderness, which none of us will deny to be genuine: —

"I have looked upon the grave that covers the remains of my Theresa: what a thousand-fold pang, beyond the pitch of human feeling, pierced through my soul! How did my limbs tremble as I approached this holy spot! Here, then, reposes what is left of the dearest that Heaven gave me; among the dust of her four children she sleeps. A sacred horror covered the place. I should have sunk altogether in my sorrow, had it not been for my two daughters that were standing on the outside of the churchyard; I saw their faces over the wall, directed to me with anxious fear. This called me to myself; I hastened in sadness from the spot where I could have continued forever; where it cheered me to think that one day I should rest by her side; rest from all the carking care, from all the griefs which so often have embittered to me the enjoyment of life. Alas! among these griefs must I reckon even her love, the strongest, truest, that ever inspired the heart of woman, which made me the happiest of mortals, and yet was a fountain to me of a thousand distresses, inquietudes and cares. To entire cheerfulness perhaps she never attained; but for what unspeakable sweetness, for what exalted enrapturing joys, is not Love indebted to Sorrow! Amidst gnawing anxieties, with the torture of anguish in my heart, I have been made even by the love which caused me this anguish, these anxieties, inexpressibly happy! When tears flowed over our cheeks, did not a nameless, seldom-felt delight stream through my breast, oppressed equally by joy and by sorrow!"

But Heyne was not a man to brood over past griefs, or linger long where nothing was to be done but mourn. In a short time, according to a good old plan of his, having reckoned up his grounds of sorrow, he fairly wrote down on paper, over against them, his "grounds of consolation;" concluding with these pious words, "So for all these sorrows too, these trials, do I thank thee, my God! And now, glorified friend, will I again turn me with undivided heart to my duty; thou thyself smilest approval on me!" Nay, it was not many months before a new marriage came on the anvil; in which matter, truly, Heyne conducted himself with the most philosophic indifference; leaving his friends, by whom the project had been started, to bring it to what issue they pleased. It was a scheme concerted by Zimmermann (the author of *Solitude*, a man little known to Heyne), and one Reich a Leipzig Bookseller, who had met at the Pyrmont Baths. Brandes, the Hanoverian Minister, successor of Münchhausen in the management of the University concerns, was there also with a daughter; upon her the projectors cast their eye. Heyne, being consulted, seems to have comported himself like clay in the hands of the potter; father and fair one, in like manner, were of a compliant humor, and thus was the business achieved; and on the 9th of April, 1777, Heyne could take home a bride, won with less difficulty than most men have in choosing a pair of boots. Nevertheless, she proved an excellent wife to him; kept his house in the cheerfulest order; managed her step-children and her own like a true mother; and loved, and faithfully assisted her husband in whatever he undertook. Considered in his private relations, such a man might well reckon himself fortunate.

In addition to Heyne's claims as a scholar and teacher, Heeren would have us regard him as an unusually expert man of business and negotiator; for which line of life he himself seems, indeed, to have thought that his talent was more peculiarly fitted. In proof of this, we have long details of his procedure in managing the Library, the Royal Society, the University generally, and his incessant and often rather complex correspondence with Münchhausen, Brandes, or other ministers who presided over this department. Without detracting from Heyne's skill in such matters, what struck us more in this narrative of Heeren's was the singular contrast which the "Georgia Augusta," in its interior arrangement, as well as its external relations to the Government, exhibits with our own Universities. The prime minister of the country writes thrice weekly to the director of an institution for learning! He oversees all; knows the character, not only of every professor, but of every pupil that gives any promise. He is continually purchasing books, drawings, models; treating for this or the other help or advantage to the establishment. He has his eye over all Germany; and nowhere does a man of any decided talent show himself, but he strains every nerve to acquire him. And seldom even can he succeed; for the Hanoverian assiduity seems nothing singular; every state in Germany has its minister for education, as well as Hanover. They correspond, they inquire, they negotiate; everywhere there seems a canvassing, less for places than for the best men to fill them. Heyne himself has his Seminarium, a private class of the nine most distinguished students in the University; these he trains with all diligence, and is in due time most probably enabled, by his connections, to place in stations fit for them. A hundred and thirty-five professors are said to have been sent from this Seminarium during his presidency. These things we state without commentary: we believe that the experience of all English and Scotch and Irish University-men will, of itself, furnish one. The state of education in Germany, and the structure of the establishments for conducting it, seems to us one of the most promising inquiries that could at this moment be entered on.

But to return to Heyne. We have said, that in his private circumstances he might reckon himself fortunate. His public relations, on a more splendid scale, continued, to the last, to be of the same happy sort. By degrees, he had risen to be, both in name and office, the chief man of his establishment; his character stood high with the learned of all countries; and the best fruit of external reputation, increased respect in his own circle, was not denied to him. The burghers of Göttingen, so fond of their University, could not but be proud of Heyne; nay, as the time passed on, they found themselves laid under more than one specific obligation to him. He remodelled and reanimated their Gymnasium (Town-School), as he had before done that of Ilfeld; and what was still more important, in the rude times of the French War, by his skilful application, he succeeded in procuring from Napoleon, not only a protection for the University, but immunity from hostile invasion for the whole district it stands in. Nay, so happily were matters managed, or so happily did they turn of their own accord, that Göttingen rather gained than suffered by the War: under Jerome of Westphalia, not only were all benefices punctually paid, but improvements even were effected; among other things, a new and very handsome extension, which had long been desired, was built for the Library, at the charge of Government. To all these claims for public regard, add Heyne's now venerable age, and we can fancy how, among his townsmen and fellow-collegians, he must have been cherished, nay almost worshipped. Already had the magistracy, by a special act, freed him from all public assessments; but in 1809, on his eightieth birthday, came a still more emphatic testimony; for Ritter Franz, and all the public Boards, and the Faculties *in corpore*, came to him in procession with good wishes; and students reverenced him; and young ladies sent him garlands, stitched together by their own fair fingers; in short, Göttingen was a place of jubilee; and good old Heyne, who nowise affected, yet could not dislike these things, was among the happiest of men.

In another respect we must also reckon him fortunate: that he lived till he had completed all his undertakings; and then departed peacefully, and without sickness, from which, indeed, his whole life had been remarkably free. Three months before his death, in April, 1812, he saw the last Volume of his Works in print; and rejoiced, it is said, with an affecting thankfulness, that so much had been granted him. Length of life was not now to be hoped for; neither did Heyne look forward to the end with apprehension. His little German verses, and Latin translations, composed in sleepless nights, at this extreme period, are, to us, by far the most touching part of his poetry; so melancholy is the spirit of them, yet so mild; solemn, not without a shade of sadness, yet full of pious resignation. At length came the end; soft and gentle as his mother could have wished it for him. The 11th of July was a public day in the Royal Society; Heyne did his part in it; spoke at large, and with even more clearness and vivacity than usual.

"Next day," says Heeren, "was Sunday: I saw him in the evening for the last time. He was resting in his chair, exhausted by the fatigue of yesterday. On Monday morning, he once more entered his class-room, and held his Seminarium. In the afternoon he prepared his letters, domestic as well as foreign; among the latter, one on business; sealed them all but one, written in Latin, to Professor Thorlacius in

Copenhagen, which I found open, but finished, on his desk. At supper (none but his elder daughter was with him) he talked cheerfully; and, at his usual time, retired to rest. In the night, the servant girl, that slept under his apartment, heard him walking up and down; a common practice with him when he could not sleep. However, he had again gone to bed. Soon after five, he arose, as usual; he joked with the girl when she asked him how he had been overnight. She left him, to make ready his coffee, as was her wont; and, returning with it in a short quarter of an hour, she found him sunk down before his washing-stand, close by his work-table. His hands were wet; at the moment when he had been washing them, had death taken him into his arms. One breath more, and he ceased to live: when the hastening doctor opened a vein, no blood would flow."

Heyne was interred with all public solemnities: and, in epicedial language, it may be said, without much exaggeration, that his country mourned for him. At Chemnitz, his birthplace, there assembled, under constituted authority, a grand meeting of the magnates, to celebrate his memory; the old school-album, in which the little ragged boy had inscribed his name, was produced; grandiloquent speeches were delivered; and "in the afternoon, many hundreds went to see the poor cottage" where his father had weaved, and he starved and learned. How generous!

To estimate Heyne's intellectual character, to fix accurately his rank and merits as a critic and philologer, we cannot but consider as beyond our province, and at any rate superfluous here. By the general consent of the learned in all countries, he seems to be acknowledged as the first among recent scholars; his immense reading, his lynx-eyed skill in exposition and emendation are no longer anywhere controverted; among ourselves his taste in these matters has been praised by Gibbon, and by Parr pronounced to be "exquisite." In his own country, Heyne is even regarded as the founder of a new epoch in classical study; as the first who with any decisiveness attempted to translate fairly beyond the letter of the Classics;

to read in the writings of the Ancients, not their language alone, or even their detached opinions and records, but their spirit and character, their way of life and thought; how the World and Nature painted themselves to the mind in those old ages; how, in one word, the Greeks and the Romans were men, even as we are. Such of our readers as have studied any one of Heyne's works, or even looked carefully into the *Lectures* of the Schlegels, the most ingenious and popular commentators of that school, will be at no loss to understand what we mean.

By his inquiries into antiquity, especially by his labored investigation of its politics and its mythology, Heyne is believed to have carried the torch of philosophy towards, if not into, the mysteries of old time. What Winkelmann, his great contemporary, did, or began to do, for ancient Plastic Art, the other with equal success began for ancient Literature.[1] A high praise, surely; yet, as we must think, one not unfounded, and which, indeed, in all parts of Europe, is becoming more and more confirmed.

So much, in the province to which he devoted his activity, is Heyne allowed to have accomplished. Nevertheless, we must not assert that, in point of understanding and spiritual endowment, he can be called a great, or even, in strict speech, a complete man. Wonderful perspicacity, unwearied diligence, are not denied him; but to philosophic order, to classical adjustment, clearness, polish, whether in word or thought, he seldom attains; nay, many times, it must be avowed, he involves himself in tortuous long-winded verbosities, and stands before us little better than one of that old school which his admirers boast that he displaced. He appears, we might also say, as if he had wings but could not well use them. Or indeed, it might be that, writing constantly in a dead language, he came to write heavily; working forever on subjects where learned armor-at-all-points cannot be dispensed with, he at last grew so habituated to his harness that he would not walk abroad without it; nay perhaps it had rusted together, and *could* not be unclasped! A sad fate for a thinker! Yet one which threatens many commentators, and overtakes many.

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[1] It is a curious fact, that these two men, so singularly correspondent in their early sufferings, subsequent distinction, line of study, and rugged enthusiasm of character, were at one time, while both as yet were under the horizon, brought into partial contact. "An acquaintance of another sort," says Heeren, "the young Heyne was to make in the Brühl Library; with a person whose importance he could not then anticipate. One frequent visitor of this establishment was a certain almost wholly unknown man, whose visits could not be specially desirable for the librarians, such endless labor did he cost them. He seemed insatiable in reading; and called for so many books, that his reception there grew rather of the coolest. It was *Johann Winkelmann.* Meditating his journey for Italy, he was then laying in preparation for it. Thus did these two men become, if not confidential, yet acquainted; who at that time, both still in darkness and poverty, could little suppose, that in a few years they were to be the teachers of cultivated Europe, and the ornaments of their nation."

As a man encrusted and encased, he exhibits himself, moreover, to a certain degree, in his moral character. Here too, as in his intellect, there is an awkwardness, a cumbrous inertness; nay, there is a show of dulness, of hardness, which nowise intrinsically belongs to him. He passed, we are told, for less religious, less affectionate, less enthusiastic than he was. His heart, one would think, had no free course, or had found itself a secret one; outwardly he stands before us cold and still, a very wall of rock; yet within lay a well, from which, as we have witnessed, the stroke of some Moses'-wand (the death of a Theresa) could draw streams of pure feeling. Callous as the man seems to us, he has a sense for all natural beauty; a merciful sympathy for his fellow-men: his own early distresses never left his memory; for similar distresses his pity and help were, at all times, in store. This form of character may also be the fruit partly of his employments, partly of his sufferings, and perhaps is not very singular among commentators.

For the rest, Heeren assures us, that in practice Heyne was truly a good man; altogether just; diligent in his own honest business, and ever ready to forward that of others; compassionate; though quick-tempered, placable; friendly, and satisfied with simple pleasures. He delighted in roses, and always kept a bouquet of them in water on his desk. His house was embowered among roses; and in his old days he used to wander through the bushes with a pair of scissors. "Farther," says

Heeren, " in spite of his short sight, he was fond of the fields and skies, and could lie for hours reading on the grass." A kindly old man! With strangers, hundreds of whom visited him, he was uniformly courteous; though latterly, being a little hard of hearing, less fit to converse. In society he strove much to be polite; but had a habit (which ought to be general) of yawning, when people spoke to him and said nothing.

On the whole, the Germans have some reason to be proud of Heyne: who shall deny that they have here once more produced a scholar of the right old stock; a man to be ranked, for honesty of study and of life, with the Scaligers, the Bentleys, and old illustrious men, who, though covered with academic dust and harsh with polyglot vocables, were true men of endeavor, and fought like giants, with such weapons as they had, for the good cause? To ourselves, we confess, Heyne, highly interesting for what he did, is not less but more so for what he was. This is another of the proofs, which minds like his are from time to time sent hither to give, that the man is not the product of his circumstances, but that, in a far higher degree, the circumstances are the product of the man. While beneficed clerks and other sleek philosophers, reclining on their cushions of velvet, are demonstrating that to make a scholar and man of taste, there must be co-operation of the upper classes, society of gentlemen-commoners, and an income of four hundred a year; — arises the son of a Chemnitz weaver, and with the very wind of his stroke sweeps them from the scene. Let no man doubt the omnipotence of Nature, doubt the majesty of man's soul; let no lonely unfriended son of genius despair! Let him not despair; if he have the will, the right will, then the power also has not been denied him. It is but the artichoke that will not grow except in gardens. The acorn is cast carelessly abroad into the wilderness, yet it rises to be an oak; on the wild soil it nourishes itself, it defies the tempest, and lives for a thousand years.

GERMAN PLAYWRIGHTS.[1]

[1829.]

In this stage of society, the playwright is as essential and acknowledged a character as the millwright, or cartwright, or any other wright whatever; neither can we see why, in general estimation, he should rank lower than these his brother artisans, except perhaps for this one reason: that the former working in timber and iron, for the wants of the body, produce a completely suitable machine; while the latter, working in thought and feeling, for the wants of the soul, produces a machine which is *in*completely suitable. In other respects, we confess we cannot perceive that the balance lies against him: for no candid man, as it seems to us, will doubt but the talent which constructed a *Virginius* or a *Bertram*, might have sufficed, had it been properly directed, to make not only wheelbarrows and wagons, but even mills of considerable complicacy. However, if the public is niggardly to the playwright in one point, it must be proportionably liberal in another; according to Adam Smith's observation, that trades which are reckoned less reputable have higher money wages. Thus, one thing compensating the other, the playwright may still realize an existence; as, in fact, we find that he does: for playwrights were, are and probably will always be; unless, indeed, in process of years, the whole dramatic concern be finally abandoned by mankind; or, as in the case of our Punch and Mathews, every player becoming his own playwright, this trade may merge in the other and older one.

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[1] Foreign Review, No. 6. — 1. *Die Ahnfrau* (The Ancestress). A Tragedy, in five Acts. By F. Grillparzer. Fourth Edition. Vienna, 1823.

König Ottokars Glück unde Ende (King Ottocar's Fortune and End). A Tragedy, in five Acts. By F. Grillparzer. Vienna, 1825.

Sappho. A Tragedy, in five Acts. By F. Grillparzer. Third Edition. Vienna, 1822.

2. *Faust.* A Tragedy, in five Acts. By August Klingemann. Leipzig and Altenburg, 1815.

Ahasuer. A Tragedy, in five Acts. By August Klingemann. Brunswick, 1827.

3. *Müllners Dramatische Werke. Erste rechtmässige, vollständige und vom Verfasser verbesserte Gesammt-Ausgabe.* (Müllner's Dramatic Works. First legal collective Edition, complete and revised by the Author.) 7 vols. Brunswick, 1828.

The British nation has its own playwrights, several of them cunning men in their craft: yet here, it would seem, this sort of carpentry does not flourish; at least, not with that preeminent vigor which distinguishes most other branches of our national industry. In hardware and cotton goods, in all sorts of chemical, mechanical, or other material processes, England outstrips the world; nay in many departments of literary manufacture also, as, for instance, in the fabrication of Novels, she may safely boast herself peerless: but in the matter of the Drama, to whatever cause it be owing, she can claim no such superiority. In theatrical produce she yields considerably to France; and is, out of sight, inferior to Germany. Nay, do not we English hear daily, for the last twenty years, that the Drama is dead, or in a state of suspended animation; and are not medical men sitting on the case, and propounding their remedial appliances, weekly, monthly, quarterly, to no manner of purpose? Whilst in Germany the Drama is not only, to all appearance, alive, but in the very flush and heyday of superabundant strength; indeed, as it were, still only sowing its first wild oats! For if the British Playwrights seem verging to ruin, and our Knowleses, Maturins, Shiels and Shees stand few and comparatively forlorn, like firs on an Irish bog, the Playwrights of Germany are a strong, triumphant body; so numerous that it has been calculated, in case of war, a regiment of foot might be raised, in which, from the colonel down to the drummer, every officer and private sentinel might show his drama or dramas.

To investigate the origin of so marked a superiority would lead us beyond our purpose. Doubtless the proximate cause must lie in a superior demand for the article of dramas; which superior demand again may arise either from the climate of Germany, as Montesquieu might believe; or perhaps more naturally and immediately from the political condition of that country; for man is not only a working but a talking animal, and where no Catholic Questions, and Parliamentary Reforms, and Select Vestries are given him to discuss in his leisure hours, he is glad to fall upon plays or players, or whatever comes to hand, whereby to fence himself a little against the inroads of Ennui. Of the fact, at least, that such a superior demand for dramas exists in Germany, we have only to open a newspaper to find proof. Is not every *Litteraturblatt* and *Kunstblatt* stuffed to bursting with theatricals? Nay, has not the "able Editor" established correspondents in every capital city of the civilized world, who report to him on this one matter and on no other? For, be our curiosity what it may, let us have profession of "intelligence from Munich," "intelligence from Vienna," "intelligence from Berlin," is it intelligence of anything but of green-room controversies and negotiations, of tragedies and operas and farces acted and to be acted? Not of men, and their doings, by hearth and hall, in the firm earth; but of mere effigies and shells of men, and their doings in the world of pasteboard, do these unhappy correspondents write. Unhappy we call them; for, with all our tolerance of playwrights, we cannot but think that there are limits, and very strait ones, within which their activity should be restricted. Here in England, our "theatrical reports" are nuisance enough; and many persons who love their life, and therefore "take care of their time, which is the stuff life is made of," regularly lose several columns of their weekly newspaper in that way: but our case is pure luxury, compared with that of the Germans, who instead of a measurable and sufferable spicing of theatric matter, are obliged, metaphorically speaking, to breakfast and dine on it; have in fact nothing else to live on but that highly unnutritive victual. We ourselves are occasional readers of German newspapers; and have often, in the spirit of Christian humanity, meditated presenting to the whole body of German editors a project, — which, however, must certainly have ere now occurred to themselves, and for some reason been found inapplicable: it was, to address these correspondents of theirs, all and sundry, in plain language, and put the question, Whether, on studiously surveying the Universe from their several stations, there was nothing in the heavens above, or the earth beneath, or the waters under the earth, *nothing* visible but this one business, or rather shadow of business, that had an interest for the minds of men? If the correspondents still answered that nothing was visible, then of course they must be left to continue in this strange state; prayers, at the same time, being put up for them in all churches.

However, leaving every able Editor to fight his own battle, we address ourselves to the task in hand: meaning here to inquire a very little into the actual state of the dramatic trade in Germany, and exhibit some detached features of it to the consideration of our readers. For, seriously speaking, low as the province may be, it is a real, active and ever-enduring province of the literary republic; nor can the pursuit of many men, even though it be a profitless and foolish pursuit, ever be without claim to some attention from us, either in the way of furtherance or of censure and correction. Our avowed object is to promote the sound study of Foreign Literature; which study, like all other earthly undertakings, has its negative as well as its positive side. We have already, as occasion served, borne testimony to the merits of various German poets; and must now say a word on certain German poetasters; hoping that it may be chiefly a regard to the former which has made us take even this slight notice of the latter: for the bad is in itself of no value, and only worth describing lest it be mistaken for the good. At the same time, let no reader tremble, as if we meant to overwhelm him, on this occasion, with a whole mountain of dramatic lumber, poured forth in torrents, like shot rubbish, from the playhouse garrets, where it is mouldering and evaporating into nothing, silently and without harm to any one. Far be this from us! Nay, our own knowledge of this subject is in the highest degree limited; and, indeed, to exhaust it, or attempt discussing it with scientific precision, would be an impossible enterprise. What man is there that could assort the whole furniture of Milton's *Limbo of Vanity;* or where is the Hallam that would undertake to write us the Constitutional History of a Rookery? Let the courteous reader take heart, then; for he is in hands that will not, nay what is more, that cannot, do him much harm. One brief shy glance into this huge bivouac of Playwrights, all sawing and planing with such tumult; and we leave it, probably for many years.

The German Parnassus, as one of its own denizens remarks, has a rather broad summit; yet only two Dramatists are reckoned, within the last century, to have mounted thither: Schiller and Goethe: if we are not, on the strength of his *Minna von Barnhelm* and *Emilie Galotti*, to account Lessing also of the number. On the slope of the Mountain may be found a few stragglers of the same brotherhood; among these, Tieck and Maler Müller, firmly enough stationed at considerable elevations; while far below appear various honest persons climbing vehemently, but against precipices of loose sand, to whom we wish all speed. But the reader will understand that the bivouac we speak of, and are about to enter, lies not on the declivity of the Hill at all; but on the level ground close to the foot of it; the essence of a Playwright being that he works not in Poetry, but in Prose which more or less cunningly resembles it.

And here pausing for a moment, the reader observes that he is in a civilized country; for see, on the very boundary-line of Parnassus, rises a gallows with the figure of a man hung in chains! It is the figure of August von Kotzebue; and has swung there for many years, as a warning to all too audacious Playwrights; who nevertheless, as we see, pay little heed to it. Ill-fated Kotzebue, once the darling of theatrical Europe! This was the prince of all Playwrights, and could manufacture Plays with a speed and felicity surpassing even Edinburgh Novels. For his muse, like other doves, hatched twins in the month; and the world gazed on them with an admiration too deep for mere words. What is all past or present popularity to this? Were not these

Plays translated into almost every language of articulate-speaking men; acted, at least, we may literally say, in every theatre from Kamtschatka to Cadiz? Nay, did they not melt the most obdurate hearts in all countries; and, like the music of Orpheus, draw tears down iron cheeks? We ourselves have known the flintiest men, who professed to have wept over them, for the first time in their lives. So was it twenty years ago; how stands it to-day? Kotzebue, lifted up on the hollow balloon of popular applause, thought wings had been given him that he might ascend to the Immortals: gay he rose, soaring, sailing, as with supreme dominion; but in the rarer azure deep, his windbag burst asunder, or the arrows of keen archers pierced it; and so at last we find him a compound-pendulum, vibrating in the character of scarecrow, to guard from forbidden fruit! O ye Playwrights, and literary quacks of every feather, weep over Kotzebue, and over yourselves! Know that the loudest roar of the million is not fame; that the windbag, are ye mad enough to mount it, *will* burst, or be shot through with arrows, and your bones too shall act as scarecrows.

But, quitting this idle allegorical vein, let us at length proceed in plain English, and as beseems mere prose Reviewers, to the work laid out for us. Among the hundreds of German Dramatists, as they are called, three individuals, already known to some British readers, and prominent from all the rest in Germany, may fitly enough stand here as representatives of the whole Playwright class; whose various craft and produce the procedure of these three may in some small degree serve to illustrate. Of Grillparzer, therefore, and Klingemann, and Müllner, in their order.

Franz Grillparzer seems to be an Austrian; which country is reckoned nowise fertile in poets; a circumstance that may perhaps have contributed a little to his own rather rapid celebrity. Our more special acquaintance with Grillparzer is of very recent date; though his name and samples of his ware have for some time been hung out, in many British and foreign Magazines, often with testimonials which might have beguiled less time-worn customers. Neither, after all, have we found these testimonials falser than other such are, but rather not so false; for, indeed, Grillparzer is a most inoffensive man, nay positively rather meritorious; nor is it without reluctance that we name him under this head of Playwrights, and not under that of Dramatists, which he aspires to. Had the law with regard to mediocre poets relaxed itself since Horace's time, all had been well with Grillparzer; for undoubtedly there *is* a small vein of tenderness and grace running through him; a seeming modesty also, and real love of his art, which gives promise of better things. But gods and men and columns are still equally rigid in that unhappy particular of mediocrity, even pleasing mediocrity; and no scene or line is yet known to us of Grillparzer's which exhibits anything more. *Non concessere*, therefore, is his sentence for the present; and the louder his well-meaning admirers extol him, the more emphatically should it be pronounced and repeated. Nevertheless Grillparzer's claim to the title of Playwright is perhaps more his misfortune than his crime. Living in a country where the Drama engrosses so much attention, he has been led into attempting it, without any decisive qualification for such an enterprise; and so his allotment of talent, which might have done good service in some prose department, or even in the sonnet, elegy, song or other outlying province of Poetry, is driven, as it were, in spite of fate, to write Plays; which, though regularly divided into scenes and separate speeches, are essentially monological; and though swarming with characters, too often express only one character, and that no very extraordinary one, — the character of Franz Grillparzer himself. What is an increase of misfortune too, he has met with applause in this career; which therefore he is likely to follow farther and farther, let nature and his stars say to it what they will.

The characteristic of a Playwright is, that he writes in Prose; which Prose he palms, probably first on himself, and then on the simpler part of the public, for Poetry: and the manner in which he effects this legerdemain constitutes his specific distinction, fixes the species to which he belongs in the genus Playwright. But it is a universal feature of him that he attempts, by prosaic, and as it were mechanical means, to accomplish an end which, except by poetical genius, is absolutely not to be accomplished. For the most part, he has some knack, or trick of the trade, which by close inspection can be detected, and so the heart of his mystery be seen into. He may have one trick, or many; and the more cunningly he can disguise these, the more perfect is he as a craftsman; for were the public once to penetrate into this his sleight-of-hand, it were all over with him, — Othello's occupation were gone. No conjurer, when we once understand his method of fire-eating, can any longer pass for a true thaumaturgist, or even entertain us in his proper character of quack, though he should eat Mount Vesuvius itself. But happily for Playwrights and others, the public is a dim-eyed animal; gullible to almost all lengths, — nay, which often seems to prefer being gulled.

Of Grillparzer's peculiar knack and recipe for play-making, there is not very much to be said. He seems to have tried various kinds of recipes, in his time; and, to his credit be it spoken, seems little contented with any of them. By much the worst Play of his, that we have seen, is the *Ahnfrau* (Ancestress); a deep tragedy of the Castle-Spectre sort; the whole mechanism of which was discernible and condemnable at a single glance. It is nothing but the old story of Fate; an invisible Nemesis visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation; a method almost as common and sovereign in German Art, at this day, as the method of steam is in British mechanics; and of which we shall anon have more occasion to speak. In his Preface, Grillparzer endeavors to palliate or deny the fact of his being a *Schicksal-Dichter* (Fate-Tragedian); but to no purpose; for it is a fact grounded on the testimony of the seven senses: however, we are glad to observe that, with this one trial, he seems to have abandoned the Fate-line, and taken into better, at least into different ones. With regard to the *Ahnfrau* itself, we may remark that few things struck us so much as this little observation of Count Borotin's, occurring in the middle of the dismalest night-thoughts, so unexpectedly, as follows: —

BERTHA.

. . . . .

Und der Himmel, sternelos,
Starrt aus leeren Augenhöhlen
In das ungeheure Grab
Schwarz herab!

GRAF.

Wie sich doch die Stunden dehnen!
Was ist wohl die Glocke, Bertha?

BERTHA (*is just condoling with him, in these words*):

. . . . .

And the welkin, starless,
Glares from empty eye-holes,
Black, down on that boundless grave!

COUNT.

How the hours do linger!
What o'clock is 't, prithee, Bertha?

A more delicate turn, we venture to say, is rarely to be met with in tragic dialogue.

As to the story of the *Ahnfrau*, it is, naturally enough, of the most heart-rending description. This Ancestress is a lady, or rather the ghost of a lady, for she has been defunct some centuries, who in life had committed what we call an "indiscretion;" which indiscretion the unpolite husband punished, one would have thought sufficiently, by running her through the body. However, the *Schicksal* of Grillparzer does not think it sufficient; but farther dooms the fair penitent to walk as goblin, till the last branch of her family be extinct. Accordingly she is heard, from time to time, slamming doors and the like, and now and then seen with dreadful goggle-eyes and other ghost-appurtenances, to the terror not only of servant people, but of old Count Borotin, her now sole male descendant, whose afternoon nap she, on one occasion, cruelly disturbs. This Count Borotin is really a worthy prosing old gentleman; only he had a son long ago drowned in a fish-pond (body not found); and has still a highly accomplished daughter, whom there is none offering to wed, except one Jaromir, a person of unknown extraction, and to all appearance of the lightest purse; nay, as it turns out afterwards, actually the head of a Banditti establishment, which had long infested the neighboring forests. However, a Captain of Foot arrives at this juncture, utterly to root out these Robbers; and now the strangest things come to light. For who should this Jaromir prove to be but poor old Borotin's drowned son; not drowned, but stolen and bred up by these Outlaws; the brother, therefore, of his intended; a most truculent fellow, who fighting for his life unwittingly kills his own father, and drives his bride to poison herself; in which wise, as was also Giles Scroggins's case, he "cannot get married." The reader sees, all this is not to be accomplished without some jarring and tumult. In fact, there is a frightful uproar everywhere throughout that night; robbers dying, musketry discharging, women shrieking, men swearing, and the Ahnfrau herself emerging at intervals, as the genius of the whole discord. But time and hours bring relief, as they always do. Jaromir in the long-run likewise succeeds in dying; whereupon the whole Borotin lineage having gone to the devil, the Ancestress also retires thither, — at least makes the upper world rid of her presence; and the piece ends in deep stillness. Of this poor Ancestress we shall only say farther: Wherever she be, *requiescat! requiescat!*

As we mentioned above, the Fate-method of manufacturing tragic emotion seems to have yielded Grillparzer himself little contentment; for after this *Ahnfrau*, we hear no more of it. His *König Ottokars Glück und Ende* (King Ottocar's Fortune and End) is a much more innocent piece, and proceeds in quite a different strain; aiming to subdue us not by old women's fables of Destiny, but by the accumulated splendor of thrones and principalities, the cruel or magnanimous pride of Austrian Emperors and Bohemian conquerors, the wit of chivalrous courtiers, and beautiful but shrewish queens; the whole set off by a proper intermixture of coronation-ceremonies, Hungarian dresses, whiskered halberdiers, alarms of battle, and the pomp and circumstance of glorious war. There is even some attempt at delineating character in this Play: certain of the *dramatis personæ* are evidently meant to differ from certain others, not in dress and name only, but in nature and mode of being; so much indeed they repeatedly assert, or hint, and do their best to make good, — unfortunately, however, with very indifferent success. In fact, these *dramatis personæ* are rubrics and titles rather than persons; for most part, mere theatrical automata, with only a mechanical existence. The truth of the matter is, Grillparzer cannot communicate a poetic life to any character or object; and in this, were it in no other way, he evinces the intrinsically prosaic nature of his talent. These personages of his have, in some instances, a certain degree of metaphysical truth; that is to say, one portion of their structure, psychologically viewed, corresponds with the other; — so far all is well enough: but to unite these merely scientific and inanimate *qualities* into a living *man* is work not for a Playwright, but for a Dramatist. Nevertheless, *König Ottokar* is comparatively a harmless tragedy. It is full of action, striking enough, though without any discernible coherence; and with so much both of flirting and fighting, with so many weddings, funerals, processions, encampments, it must be, we should think, if the tailor and decorationist do their duty, a very comfortable piece to see acted; especially on the Vienna boards, where it has a national interest, Rodolph of Hapsburg being a main personage in it.

The model of this *Ottokar* we imagine to have been Schiller's *Piccolomini;* a poem of similar materials and object; but differing from it as a living rose from a mass of dead rose-leaves, or even of broken Italian gumflowers. It seems as though Grillparzer had hoped to subdue us by a sufficient multitude of wonderful scenes and circumstances, without inquiring, with any painful solicitude, whether the soul and meaning of them were presented to us or not. Herein truly, we believe, lies the peculiar knack or playwright-mystery of *Ottokar:* that its effect is calculated to depend chiefly on its quantity; on the mere number of astonishments, and joyful or deplorable adventures there brought to light; abundance in superficial contents compensating the absence of selectness and *callida junctura.* Which second method of tragic manufacture we hold to be better than the first, but still far from good. At the same time it is a very common method, both in Tragedy and elsewhere; nay, we hear persons whose trade it is to write metre, or be otherwise "imaginative," professing it openly as the best they know. Do not these men go about collecting "features;" ferreting out strange incidents, murders, duels, ghost-apparitions, over the habitable globe? Of which features and incidents when they have gathered a sufficient stock, what more is needed than that they *be* ample enough, high-colored enough, though huddled into any case (Novel, Tragedy or Metrical Romance) that will hold them all? Nevertheless this is agglomeration, not creation; and avails little in Literature. Quantity, it is a certain fact, will *not* make up for defect of quality; nor are the gayest hues of any service, unless there be a likeness painted from them. Better were it for *König Ottokar* had the story been twice as short and twice as expressive. For it is still true, as in Cervantes' time, *nunca lo bueno fué mucho.* What avails the dram of brandy, while it swims chemically united with its barrel of wort? Let the distiller pass it and repass it through his limbecs; for it is the drops of pure alcohol that we want, not the gallons of water, which may be had in every ditch.

On the whole, however, we remember *König Ottokar* without animosity; and to prove that Grillparzer, if he could not make it poetical, might have made it less prosaic, and has in fact something better in him than is here manifested, we shall quote one passage, which strikes us as really rather sweet and natural. King Ottocar is in the last of his fields, no prospect before him but death or captivity; and soliloquizing on his past misdeeds: —

> "I have not borne me wisely in thy World,
> Thou great, all-judging God! Like storm and tempest
> I traversed thy fair garden, wasting it:

'T is thine to waste, for thou alone canst heal.
Was evil not my aim, yet how did I,
Poor worm, presume to ape the Lord of Worlds,
And through the Bad seek out a way to the Good!

"My fellow-man, sent thither for his joy,
An End, a Self, within thy World a World, —
For thou hast fashioned him a marvellous work,
With lofty brow, erect in look, strange sense,
And clothed him in the garment of thy Beauty,
And wondrously encircled him with wonders;
He hears, and sees, and feels, has pain and pleasure;
He takes him food, and cunning powers come forth,
And work and work, within their secret chambers,
And build him up his House: no royal Palace
Is comparable to the frame of Man!
And I have cast them forth from me by thousands,
For whims, as men throw rubbish from their door.
And none of all these slain but had a Mother
Who, as she bore him in sore travail,
Had clasped him fondly to her fostering breast;
A Father who had blessed him as his pride,
And nurturing, watched over him long years:
If he but hurt the skin upon his finger,
There would they run, with anxious look, to bind it,
And tend it, cheering him, until it healed;
And it was but a finger, the skin o' the finger!
And I have trod men down in heaps and squadrons,
For the stern iron op'ning out a way
To their warm living hearts. — O God,
Wilt thou go into judgment with me, spare
My suffering people." [1]

Passages of this sort, scattered here and there over Grillparzer's Plays, and evincing at least an amiable tenderness of natural disposition, make us regret the more to condemn him. In fact, we have hopes that he is not born to be forever a Playwright. A true though feeble vein of poetic talent he really seems to possess; and such purity of heart as may yet, with assiduous study, lead him into his proper field. For we do reckon him a conscientious man, and honest lover of Art; nay this incessant fluctuation in his dramatic schemes is itself a good omen. Besides this *Ahnfrau* and *Ottokar*, he has written two dramas, *Sappho* and *Der Goldene Vliess* (The Golden Fleece), on quite another principle; aiming apparently at some Classic model, or at least at some French reflex of such a model. *Sappho*, which we are sorry to learn is not his last piece, but his second, appears to us very considerably the most faultless production of his we are yet acquainted with. There is a degree of grace and simplicity in it, a softness, polish and general good taste, little to be expected from the author of the *Ahnfrau:* if he cannot bring out the full tragic meaning of Sappho's situation, he contrives, with laudable dexterity, to avoid the ridicule that lies within a single step of it; his Drama is weak and thin, but innocent, lovable; nay the last scene strikes us as even poetically meritorious. His *Goldene Vliess* we suspect to be of similar character, but have not yet found time and patience to study it. We repeat our hope of one day meeting Grillparzer in a more honorable calling than this of Playwright, or even fourth-rate Dramatist; which titles, as was said above, we have not given him without regret; and shall be truly glad to cancel for whatever better one he may yet chance to merit.

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[1] *König Ottokar*, 180, 181.

But if we felt a certain reluctance in classing Grillparzer among the Playwrights, no such feeling can have place with regard to the second name on our list, that of Doctor August Klingemann. Dr. Klingemann is one of the most indisputable Playwrights now extant; nay so superlative is his vigor in this department, we might even designate him *the* Playwright. His manner of proceeding is quite different from Grillparzer's; not a wavering ever-changed method, or combination of methods, as the other's was; but a fixed principle of action, which he follows with unflinching courage; his own mind being to all appearance highly satisfied with it. If Grillparzer attempted to overpower us, now by the method of Fate, now by that of pompous action, and grandiloquent or lachrymose sentiment, heaped on us in too rich abundance, Klingemann, without neglecting any of these resources, seems to place his chief dependence on a surer and readier stay, — on his magazines of rosin, oil-paper, vizards, scarlet-drapery and gunpowder. What thunder and lightning, magic-lantern transparencies, death's-heads, fire-showers and plush-cloaks can do, is here done. Abundance of churchyard and chapel scenes, in the most tempestuous weather; to say nothing of battle-fields, gleams of scoured arms here and there in the wood, and even occasional shots heard in the distance. Then there are such scowls and malignant side-glances, ashy palenesses, stampings and hysterics, as might, one would think, wring the toughest bosom into drops of pity. For not only are the looks and gestures of these people of the most heart-rending description, but their words and feelings also (for Klingemann is no half-artist) are of a piece with them: gorgeous inflations, the purest innocence, highest magnanimity; godlike sentiment of all sorts; everywhere the finest tragic humor. The moral too is genuine; there is the most anxious regard to virtue; indeed a distinct patronage both of Providence and the Devil. In this manner does Dr. Klingemann compound his dramatic electuaries, no less cunningly than Dr. Kitchiner did his "peptic persuaders;" and truly of the former we must say, that their operation is nowise unpleasant; nay to our shame be it spoken, we have even read these Plays with a certain degree of satisfaction; and shall declare that if any man wish to amuse himself irrationally, here is the ware for his money.

Klingemann's latest dramatic undertaking is *Ahasuer;* a purely original invention, on which he seems to pique himself somewhat; confessing his opinion that, now when the "birth-pains" are over, the character of *Ahasuer* may possibly do good service in many a future drama. We are not prophets, or sons of prophets; so shall leave this prediction resting on its own basis. Ahasuer, the reader will be interested to learn, is no other than the Wandering Jew or Shoemaker of Jerusalem: concerning whom there are two things to be remarked. The first is, the strange name of the Shoemaker: why do Klingemann and all the Germans call the man *Ahasuer*, when his authentic Christian name is John; *Joannes a Temporibus*

Christi, or, for brevity's sake, simply *Joannes a Temporibus?* This should be looked into. Our second remark is of the circumstance that no Historian or Narrator, neither Schiller, Strada, Thuanus, Monro, nor Dugald Dalgetty, makes any mention of Ahasuer's having been present at the Battle of Lützen. Possibly they thought the fact too notorious to need mention. Here, at all events, he was; nay, as we infer, he must have been at Waterloo also; and probably at Trafalgar, though in which Fleet is not so clear; for he takes a hand in all great battles and national emergencies, at least is witness of them, being bound to it by his destiny. Such is the peculiar occupation of the Wandering Jew, as brought to light in this Tragedy· his other specialties, — that he cannot lodge above three nights in one place; that he is of a melancholic temperament; above all, that he cannot die, not by hemp or steel, or Prussic-acid itself, but must travel on till the general consummation, — are familiar to all historical readers. Ahasuer's task at this Battle of Lützen seems to have been a very easy one: simply to see the Lion of the North brought down; not by a cannon-shot, as is generally believed, but by the traitorous pistol-bullet of one Heinyn von Warth, a bigoted Catholic, who had pretended to desert from the Imperialists, that he might find some such opportunity. Unfortunately, Heinyn, directly after this feat, falls into a sleepless, half-rabid state; comes home to Castle Warth, frightens his poor Wife and worthy old noodle of a Father; then skulks about, for some time, now praying, oftener cursing and swearing; till at length the Swedes lay hold of him and kill him. Ahasuer, as usual, is in at the death: in the interim, however, he has saved Lady Heinyn from drowning, though as good as poisoned her with the look of his strange stony eyes; and now his business to all appearance being over, he signifies in strong language that he must begone; thereupon he "steps solemnly into the wood; Wasaburg looks after him surprised: the rest kneel round the corpse; the *Requiem* faintly continues;" and what is still more surprising, "the curtain falls." Such is the simple action and stern catastrophe of this Tragedy; concerning which it were superfluous for us to speak farther in the way of criticism. We shall only add, that there is a dreadful lithographic print in it, representing "Ludwig Devrient as Ahasuer;" in that very act of "stepping solemnly into the wood;" and uttering these final words: "*Ich aber wandle weiter — weiter — weiter!*" We have heard of Herr Devrient as of the best actor in Germany; and can now bear testimony, if there be truth in this plate, that he is one of the ablest-bodied men. A most truculent, rawboned figure, "with bare legs and red-leather shoes;" huge black beard; eyes turned inside out; and uttering these extraordinary words: "But *I* go on — on — on!"

Now, however, we must give a glance at Klingemann's other chief performance in this line, the Tragedy of *Faust*. Dr. Klingemann admits that the subject has been often treated; that Goethe's *Faust* in particular has "dramatic points (*dramatische Momente*):" but the business is to give it an entire dramatic superficies, to make it an *ächt dramatische*, a "genuinely dramatic" tragedy. Setting out with this laudable intention, Dr. Klingemann has produced a *Faust*, which differs from that of Goethe in more than one particular. The hero of this piece is not the old Faust, doctor in philosophy; driven desperate by the uncertainty of human knowledge; but plain John Faust, the printer, and even the inventor of gunpowder; driven desperate by his ambitious temper, and a total deficiency of cash. He has an excellent wife, an excellent blind father, both of whom would fain have him be peaceable, and work at his trade; but being an adept in the black-art, he determines rather to relieve himself in that way. Accordingly, he proceeds to make a contract with the Devil, on what we should consider pretty advantageous terms; the Devil being bound to serve him in the most effectual manner, and Faust at liberty to commit *four* mortal sins before any hair of his head can be harmed. However, as will be seen, the Devil proves Yorkshire; and Faust, naturally enough, finds himself quite jockeyed in the long-run.

Another characteristic distinction of Klingemann is his manner of embodying this same Evil Principle, when at last he resolves on introducing him to sight; for all these contracts and preliminary matters are very properly managed behind the scenes; only the main points of the transaction being indicated to the spectator by some thunder-clap, or the like. Here is no cold mocking Mephistopheles ; but a swaggering, jovial, West-India-looking "Stranger," with a rubicund, indeed quite brick-colored face, which Faust at first mistakes for the effect of hard-drinking. However, it is a remarkable feature of this Stranger, that always on the introduction of any religious topic, or the mention of any sacred name, he strikes his glass down on the table, and generally breaks it.

For some time, after his grand bargain, Faust's affairs go on triumphantly, on the great scale, and he seems to feel pretty comfortable. But the Stranger shows him "his wife," Helena, the most enchanting creature in the world; and the most cruel-hearted, — for, notwithstanding the easy temper of her husband, she will not grant Faust the smallest encouragement, till he have killed Käthe, his own living helpmate, against whom he entertains no manner of grudge. Nevertheless, reflecting that he has a stock of four mortal sins to draw upon, and may well venture one for such a prize, he determines on killing Käthe. But here matters take a bad turn : for having poisoned poor Käthe, he discovers, most unexpectedly, that she is in the family-way; and therefore that he has committed not one sin but two! Nay, before the interment can take place, he is farther reduced, in a sort of accidental self-defence, to kill his father ; thus accomplishing his third mortal sin ; with which third, as we shall presently discover, his whole allotment is exhausted ; a fourth, that he knew not of, being already on the score against him! From this point, it cannot surprise us that bad grows worse : catchpoles are out in pursuit of him, "black masks" dance round him in a most suspicious manner, the brick-faced Stranger seems to laugh at him, and Helena will nowhere make her appearance. That the sympathizing reader may see with his own eyes how poor Faust is beset at this juncture, we shall quote a scene or two. The first may, properly enough, be that of those "black masks."

Scene VII.

A lighted Hall.

In the distance is heard quick dancing-music. Masks pass from time to time over the Stage, but all dressed in black, and with vizards perfectly close. After a pause, Faust plunges wildly in, with a full goblet in his hand.

Faust [*rushing stormfully into the foreground*].
Ha! Poison, 'stead of wine, that I intoxicate me!
Your wine makes sober, — burning fire bring us!
Off with your drink! — and blood is in it too!
[*Shuddering, he dashes the goblet from his hand.*
My father's blood, — I 've drunk my fill of *that!*
[*With increasing tumult.*
Yet curses on him! curses, that he begot me!
Curse on my mother's bosom, that it bore me!
Curse on the gossip-crone that stood by her,
And did not strangle me at my first scream!
How could I help this being that was given me?
Accursed art thou, Nature, that hast mock'd me!
Accursed I, that let myself be mock'd! —
And thou, strong Being, that, to make thee sport,
Enclosedst the fire-soul in this dungeon,
That so despairing it might strive for freedom —
Accur . . . [*He shrinks terror-struck.*
No, not the *fourth* . . . the blackest sin!
No! no! [*In the excess of his outbreaking anguish, he hides his face in his hands.*
Oh, I am altogether wretched!

Three black Masks come towards him.

First Mask. Hey! merry friend!
Second Mask. Hey! merry brother!
Third Mask [*reiterating with a cutting tone*]. Merry!
Faust [*breaking out in wild humor, and looking round among them*]. Hey! merry, then!
First Mask. Will any one catch flies?
Second Mask. A long life yet; — to midnight all the way!

Third Mask. And after that, such pleasure without end!
[*The music suddenly ceases, and a clock strikes thrice.*

Faust [*astonished*]. What is it?

First Mask. Wants a quarter, Sir, of twelve!

Second Mask. Then we have time!

Third Mask. Ay, time enough for jigging!

First Mask. And not till midnight comes the shot to pay!

Faust [*shuddering*]. What want ye?

First Mask [*clasps his hand abruptly*].
Hey! To dance a step with thee!

Faust [*plucks his hands back*]. Off! — Fire!!

First Mask. Tush! A spark or so of brimstone!

Second Mask. Art dreaming, brother?

Third Mask. Holloa! Music, there!
[*The music begins again in the distance.*

First Mask [*secretly laughing*]. The spleen is biting him!

Second Mask. Hark! at the gallows,
What jovial footing of it!

Third Mask. Thither must I! [*Exit.*

First Mask. Below, too! down in Purgatory! Hear ye?

Second Mask. A stirring *there?* 'T is time, then! Hui, your servant!

First Mask [*to Faust*]. Till midnight!
[*Exeunt both Masks hastily.*

Faust [*clasping his brow*]. Ha! What begirds me here?
[*Stepping vehemently forward.*
Down with your masks! [*Violent knocking without.*
What horrid uproar next!
Is madness coming on me? —

Voice [*violently from without*]. Open, in the King's name!
[*The music ceases. Thunder-clap.*

Faust [*staggers back*].
I have a heavy dream! — Sure '*t is* not doomsday?

Voice [*as before*]. Here is the murderer! Open! Open, then!

Faust [*wipes his brow*]. Has agony unmanned me? —

Scene VIII.

Bailiffs. Where is he? where? —

From these merely terrestrial constables the jovial Stranger easily delivers Faust: but now comes the long-looked-for *tête-à-tête* with Helena.

SCENE XII.

Faust leads Helena on the stage. She also is close-masked. The other Masks withdraw.

FAUST [*warm and glowing*]. No longer strive, proud beauty!
HELENA. Ha, wild stormer!
FAUST. My bosom burns — !
HELENA. The time is not yet come. —

— And so forth, through four pages of flame and ice, till at last,

FAUST [*insisting*]. Off with the mask, then!
HELENA [*still wilder*]. Hey! the marriage-hour! —
FAUST. Off with the mask!!
HELENA. 'T is striking!!
FAUST. One kiss!
HELENA. Take it!!
[*The mask and head-dress fall from her; and she grins at him from a death's-head: loud thunder; and the music ends, as with a shriek, in dissonances.*
FAUST [*staggers back*]. O horror! — Woe!
HELENA. The couch is ready, there!
Come, Bridegroom, to thy fire-nuptials!
[*She sinks, with a crashing thunder-peal, into the ground, out of which issue flames.*

All this is bad enough; but mere child's-play to the "Thirteenth Scene," the last of this strange eventful history: with some parts of which we propose to send our readers weeping to their beds.

SCENE XIII.

The Stranger hurls Faust, whose face is deadly pale, back to the stage, by the hair.

FAUST. Ha, let me fly! — Come! Come!
STRANGER [*with wild thundering tone*]. 'T is over now!
FAUST. That horrid visage! —
[*Throwing himself, in a tremor, on the Stranger's breast.*
Thou art my Friend!
Protect me!!
STRANGER [*laughing aloud*]. Ha! ha! ha!

. . . . .

FAUST. Oh, save me!!
STRANGER [*clutches him with irresistible force; whirls him round, so that Faust's face is towards the spectators, whilst his own is turned away; and thus he looks at him, and bawls with thundering voice*]. 'T is I!! —
[*A clap of thunder. Faust, with gestures of deepest horror, rushes to the ground, uttering an inarticulate cry. The other, after a pause, continues, with cutting coolness:*
Is that the mighty Hell-subduer,
That threatened *me?* — Ha, ME!! [*With highest contempt.*
Worm of the dust!
I had reserved thy torment for — *myself!!* —
Descend to other hands, be sport for slaves —
Thou art too small for me!!
FAUST [*rises erect, and seems to recover his strength*].
Am not I Faust?
STRANGER. Thou, no!
FAUST. [*rising in his whole vehemence*].
Accursed! Ha, I am! I am!
Down at my feet! — I am thy master!
STRANGER. No more!!
FAUST [*wildly*]. More? Ha! My Bargain!!
STRANGER. Is concluded!
FAUST. *Three* mortal sins. —
STRANGER. The Fourth too is committed!
FAUST. My Wife, my Child, and my old Father's blood — !
STRANGER [*holds up a Parchment to him*]. And here *thy own!* —
FAUST. That is my covenant!

STRANGER. This *signature* — was thy most damning sin!
FAUST [*raging*]. Ha, spirit of lies!! &c. &c.

. . . . .

STRANGER [*in highest fury*]. Down, thou accursed!
[*He drags him by the hair towards the background; at this moment, amid violent thunder and lightning, the scene changes into a horrid wilderness; in the background of which, a yawning Chasm: into this the Devil hurls Faust; on all sides fire rains down, so that the whole interior of the Cavern seems burning: a black veil descends over both, so soon as Faust is got under.*
FAUST [*huzzaing in wild defiance*]. Ha, down! Down!
[*Thunder, lightning and fire. Both sink. The curtain falls.*

On considering all which supernatural transactions, the bewildered reader has no theory for it, except that Faust must, in Dr. Cabanis's phrase, have labored under "obstructions in the epigastric region," and all this of the Devil, and Helena, and so much murder and carousing, have been nothing but a waking dream, or other atrabilious phantasm; and regrets that the poor Printer had not rather applied to some Abernethy on the subject, or even, by one sufficient dose of Epsom-salt, on his own prescription, put an end to the whole matter, and restored himself to the bosom of his afflicted family.

Such, then, for Dr. Klingemann's part, is his method of constructing Tragedies; to which method it may perhaps be objected that there is a want of originality in it; for do not our own British Playwrights follow precisely the same plan? We might answer that, if not his plan, at least his infinitely superior execution of it must distinguish Klingemann: but we rather think his claim to originality rests on a different ground; on the ground, namely, of his entire contentment with himself and with this his dramaturgy; and the cool heroism with which, on all occasions, he avows that contentment. Here is no poor cowering underfoot Playwright, begging the public for God's sake not to give him the whipping which he deserves; but a bold perpendicular Playwright, avowing himself as such; nay mounted on the top of his joinery, and therefrom exercising a sharp critical superintendence over the German Drama generally. Klingemann, we understand, has lately executed a theatrical Tour, as Don Quixote did various Sallies; and thrown stones into most German Playhouses, and at various German Playwriters; of which we have seen only his assault on Tieck; a feat comparable perhaps to that "never-imagined adventure of the Windmills." Fortune, it is said, favors the brave; and the prayer of Burns's Kilmarnock weaver is not always unheard of Heaven. In conclusion, we congratulate Dr. Klingemann on his Manager-dignity in the Brunswick Theatre; a post he seems made for, almost as Bardolph was for the Eastcheap waitership.

But now, like his own Ahasuer, Dr. Klingemann must "go on — on — on:" for another and greater Doctor has been kept too long waiting, whose Seven beautiful Volumes of *Dramatische Werke* might well secure him a better fate. Dr. Müllner, of all these Playwrights, is the best known in England; some of his works have even, we believe, been translated into our language. In his own country, his fame, or at least notoriety, is also supreme over all: no Playwright of this age makes such a noise as Müllner; nay, many there are who affirm that he is something far better than a Playwright. Critics of the sixth and lower magnitudes, in every corner of Germany, have put the question a thousand times: Whether Müllner is not a Poet and Dramatist? To which question, as the higher authorities maintain an obstinate silence, or, if much pressed, reply only in groans, these sixth-magnitude men have been obliged to make answer themselves; and they have done it with an emphasis and vociferation calculated to dispel all remaining doubts in the minds of men. In Müllner's mind, at least, they have left little; a conviction the more excusable, as the play-going vulgar seem to be almost unanimous in sharing it; and thunders of applause, nightly through so many theatres, return him loud acclaim.

Such renown is pleasant food for the hungry appetite of a man, and naturally he rolls it as a sweet morsel under his tongue: but, after all, it can profit him but little; nay, many times, what is sugar to the taste may be sugar-of-lead when it is swallowed. Better were it for Müllner, we think, had fainter thunders of applause and from fewer theatres greeted him. For what good is in it, even were there no evil? Though a thousand caps leap into the air at his name, his own stature is no hair's-breadth higher; neither even can the final estimate of its height be thereby in the smallest degree enlarged. From gainsayers these greetings provoke only a stricter scrutiny; the matter comes to be accurately known at last; and he who has been treated with foolish liberality at one period must make up for it by the want of bare necessaries at another. No one will deny that Müllner is a person of some considerable talent: we understand he is, or was once, a Lawyer; and can believe that he may have acted, and talked, and written, very prettily in that capacity: but to set up for a Poet was quite a different enterprise, in which we reckon that he has altogether mistaken his road, and that these mob-cheers have led him farther and farther astray.

Several years ago, on the faith of very earnest recommendation, it was our lot to read one of Dr. Müllner's Tragedies, the *Albanäserinn;* with which, such was its effect on us, we could willingly enough have terminated our acquaintance with Dr. Müllner. A palpable imitation of Schiller's *Braut von Messina;* without any philosophy or feeling that was not either perfectly commonplace or perfectly false, often both the one and the other; inflated, indeed, into a certain hollow bulk, but altogether without greatness; being built throughout on mere rant and clangor, and other elements of the most indubitable Prose: such a work could not but be satisfactory to us respecting Dr. Müllner's genius as a Poet; and time being precious, and the world wide enough, we had privately determined that we and Dr. Müllner were each henceforth to pursue his own course. Nevertheless, so considerable has been the progress of our worthy friend since then, both at home and abroad, that his labors are again forced on our notice: for we reckon the existence of a true Poet in any country to be so important a fact, that even the slight probability of such is worthy of investigation. Accordingly we have again perused the *Albanäserinn*, and along with it faithfully examined the whole Dramatic Works of Müllner, published in Seven Volumes, on beautiful paper, in small shape and every way very fit for handling. The whole tragic works, we should rather say: for three or four of his comic performances sufficiently contented us; and some two volumes of farces, we confess, are still unread. We have also carefully gone through, and with much less difficulty, the Prefaces, Appendices, and other prose sheets, wherein the Author exhibits the "*fata libelli;*" defends himself from unjust criticisms, reports just ones, or himself makes such. The toils of this task we shall not magnify, well knowing that man's life is a fight throughout: only having now gathered what light is to be had on this matter, we proceed to speak forth our verdict thereon; fondly hoping that we shall then have done with it, for an indefinite period of time.

Dr. Müllner, then, we must take liberty to believe, in spite of all that has been said or sung upon the subject, is no Dramatist; has never written a Tragedy, and in all human probability will never write one. Grounds for this harsh, negative opinion, did the burden of proof lie chiefly on our side, we might state in extreme abundance. There is one ground, however, which, if our observation be correct, would virtually include all the rest. Dr. Müllner's whole soul and character, to the deepest root we can trace of it, seems prosaic, not poetical; his Dramas, therefore, like whatever else he produces, must be manufactured, not created; nay, we think that his principle of manufacture is itself rather a poor and second-hand one. Vain were it for any reader to search in these Seven Volumes for an opinion any deeper or clearer, a sentiment any finer or higher, than may conveniently belong to the commonest practising advocate: except stilting heroics, which the man himself half knows to be false, and every other man easily waves aside, there is nothing here to disturb the quiescence either of heart or head. This man is a *Doctor utriusque Juris*, most probably of good juristic talent; and nothing more whatever. His language too, all accurately measured into feet, and good current German, so far as a foreigner may judge, bears similar testimony. Except the rhyme and metre, it exhibits no poetical symptom: without being verbose, it is essentially meagre and watery; no idiomatic expressiveness, no melody, no virtue of any kind; the commonest vehicle for the commonest meaning. Not that our Doctor is destitute of metaphors and other rhetorical furtherances; but that these also are of the most trivial character: old threadbare material, scoured up into a state of shabby-gentility; mostly turning on "light" and "darkness;" "flashes through clouds," "fire of heart," "tempest of soul," and the like, which can profit no man or woman. In short, we must repeat it, Dr. Müllner has yet to show that there is any particle of poetic metal in him; that his genius is other than a sober clay-pit, from which good bricks may be made; but where to look for gold or diamonds were sheer waste of labor.

When we think of our own Maturin and Sheridan Knowles, and the gala-day of popularity which they also once enjoyed with us, we can be at no loss for the genus under which Dr. Müllner is to be included in critical physiology. Nevertheless, in marking him as a distinct Playwright, we are bound to mention that in general intellectual talent he shows himself very considerably superior to his two German brethren. He has a much better taste than Klingemann; rejecting the aid of plush and gunpowder, we may say altogether; is even at the pains to rhyme great part of his Tragedies; and, on the whole, writes with a certain care and decorous composure, to which the Brunswick Manager seems totally indifferent. Moreover, he appears to surpass Grillparzer, as well as Klingemann, in a certain force both of judgment and passion; which indeed is no very mighty affair; Grillparzer being naturally but a treble-pipe in these matters; and Klingemann, blowing through such an enormous coach-horn, that the natural note goes for nothing, becomes a mere vibration in that all-subduing volume of sound. At the same time, it is singular enough that neither Grillparzer nor Klingemann should be nearly so tough reading as Müllner; which, however, we declare to be the fact. As to Klingemann, he is even an amusing artist;

there is such a briskness and heart in him; so rich is he, nay so exuberant in riches, so full of explosions, fire-flashes, execrations and all manner of catastrophes; and then, good soul, he asks *no* attention from us, knows his trade better than to dream of asking any. Grillparzer, again, is a sadder and perhaps a wiser companion; long-winded a little, but peaceable and soft-hearted: his melancholy, even when he pules, is in the highest degree inoffensive, and we can often weep a tear or two *for* him, if not with him. But of all Tragedians, may the indulgent Heavens deliver us from any farther traffic with Dr. Müllner! This is the lukewarm, which we could wish to be either cold or hot. Müllner will not keep us awake, while we read him; yet neither will he, like Klingemann, let us fairly get asleep. Ever and anon, it is as if we came into some smooth quiescent country; and the soul flatters herself that here at last she may be allowed to fall back on her cushions, the eyes meanwhile, like two safe postilions, comfortably conducting her through that flat region, in which are nothing but flax-crops and milestones; and ever and anon some jolt or unexpected noise fatally disturbs her; and looking out, it is no waterfall or mountain chasm, but only the villanous highway, and squalls of October wind. To speak without figure, Dr. Müllner does seem to us a singularly oppressive writer; and perhaps for this reason: that he hovers *too* near the verge of good writing; ever tempting us with some hope that here is a touch of Poetry; and ever disappointing us with a touch of pure Prose. A stately sentiment comes tramping forth with a clank that sounds poetic and heroic: we start in breathless expectation, waiting to reverence the heavenly guest; and, alas, he proves to be but an old stager dressed in new buckram, a stager well known to us, nay often a stager that has already been drummed out of most well-regulated communities. So is it ever with Dr. Müllner: no feeling can be traced much deeper in him than the tongue; or perhaps when we search more strictly, instead of an ideal of beauty, we shall find some vague aim after strength, or in defect of this, after mere size. And yet how cunningly he manages the counterfeit! A most plausible, fair-spoken, close-shaven man: a man whom you must not, for decency's-sake, throw out of the window; and yet you feel that, being palpably a Turk in grain, his intents are wicked and not charitable!

But the grand question with regard to Müllner, as with regard to those other Playwrights, is: Where lies his peculiar sleight-of-hand in this craft? Let us endeavor, then, to find out his secret, — his recipe for play-making; and communicate the same for behoof of the British nation. Müllner's recipe is no mysterious one; floats, indeed, on the very surface; might even be taught, one would suppose, on a few trials, to the humblest capacity. Our readers may perhaps recollect Zacharias Werner, and some short allusion, in our First Number, to a highly terrific piece of his, entitled *The Twenty-fourth of February.* A more detailed account of the matter may be found in Madame de Staël's *Allemagne;* in the Chapter which treats of that infatuated Zacharias generally. It is a story of a Swiss peasant and bankrupt, called Kurt Kuruh, if we mistake not; and of his wife, and a rich travelling stranger lodged with them; which latter is, in the night of the Twenty-fourth of February, wilfully and feloniously murdered by the two former; and proves himself, in the act of dying, to be their own only son, who had returned home to make them all comfortable, could they only have had a little more patience. But the foul deed is already accomplished, with a rusty knife or scythe; and nothing of course remains but for the whole batch to go to perdition. For it was written, as the Arabs say, "on the iron leaf:" these Kuruhs are doomed men; old Kuruh, the grandfather, had committed some sin or other; for which, like the sons of Atreus, his descendants are "prosecuted with the utmost rigor:" nay so punctilious is Destiny, that this very Twenty-fourth of February, the day when that old sin was enacted, is still a fatal day with the family; and this very knife or scythe, the criminal tool on that former occasion, is ever the instrument of new crime and punishment; the Kuruhs, during all that half-century, never having carried it to the smithy to make hobnails; but kept it hanging on a peg, most injudiciously we think, almost as a sort of bait and bonus to

Satan, a ready-made fulcrum for whatever machinery he might bring to bear against them. This is the tragic lesson taught in Werner's *Twenty-fourth of February;* and, as the whole *dramatis personæ* are either stuck through with old iron, or hanged in hemp, it is surely taught with some considerable emphasis.

Werner's Play was brought out at Weimar, in 1809; under the direction or permission, as he brags, of the great Goethe himself; and seems to have produced no faint impression on a discerning public. It is, in fact, a piece nowise destitute of substance and a certain coarse vigor; and if any one has so obstinate a heart that he must absolutely stand in a slaughter-house, or within wind of the gallows before tears will come, it may have a very comfortable effect on him. One symptom of merit it must be admitted to exhibit, — an adaptation to the general taste; for the small fibre of originality which exists here has already shot forth into a whole wood of imitations. We understand that the Fate-line is now quite an established branch of dramatic business in Germany; they have their Fate-dramatists, just as we have our gingham-weavers and inkle-weavers. Of this Fate-manufacture we have already seen one sample in Grillparzer's *Ahnfrau:* but by far the most extensive Fate-manufacturer, the head and prince of all Fate-dramatists, is the Dr. Müllner at present under consideration. Müllner deals in Fate, and Fate only; it is the basis and staple of his whole tragedy-goods; cut off this one principle, you annihilate his raw material, and he can manufacture no more.

Müllner acknowledges his obligations to Werner; but, we think, not half warmly enough. Werner was in fact the making of him; great as he has now become, our Doctor is nothing but a mere mistletoe growing from that poor oak, itself already half dead; had there been no *Twenty-fourth of February*, there were then no *Twenty-ninth of February*, no *Schuld*, no *Albanäserinn*, most probably no *König Yngurd.* For the reader is to understand that Dr. Müllner, already a middle-aged, and as yet a perfectly undramatic man, began business with a direct copy of this *Twenty-fourth;* a thing proceeding by Destiny, and ending in murder, by a knife or scythe, as in the Kuruh case; with one improvement, indeed, that there was a grinding-stone introduced into the scene, and the spectator had the satisfaction of seeing the knife previously whetted. The Author, too, was honest enough publicly to admit his imitation; for he named this Play the *Twenty-ninth of February;* and, in his Preface, gave thanks, though somewhat reluctantly, to Werner, as to his master and originator. For some inscrutable reason, this *Twenty-ninth* was not sent to the greengrocer, but became popular: there was even the weakest of parodies written on it, entitled *Eumenides Düster* (Eumenides Gloomy), which Müllner has reprinted; there was likewise "a wish expressed" that the termination might be made joyous, not grievous; with which wish also the indefatigable wright has complied; and so, for the benefit of weak nerves, we have the *Wahn* (Delusion), which still ends in tears, but glad ones. In short, our Doctor has a peculiar merit with this *Twenty-ninth* of his; for who but he could have cut a second and a third face on the same cherry-stone, said cherry-stone having first to be borrowed, or indeed half-stolen?

At this point, however, Dr. Müllner apparently began to set up for himself; and ever henceforth he endeavors to persuade his own mind and ours that his debt to Werner terminates here. Nevertheless clear it is that fresh debt was every day contracting. For had not this one Wernerian idea taken complete hold of the Doctor's mind; so that he was quite possessed with it, had, we might say, no other tragic idea whatever? That a man on a certain day of the month shall fall into crime; for which an invisible Fate shall silently pursue him; punishing the transgression, most probably on the same day of the month, annually (unless, as in the *Twenty-ninth*, it be leap-year, and Fate in this may be, to a certain extent, bilked); and never resting till the poor wight himself, and perhaps his last descendant, shall be swept away with the besom of destruction; such, more or less disguised, frequently without any disguise, is the tragic essence, the vital principle, natural or galvanic we are not deciding, of all Dr. Müllner's Dramas. Thus, in that everlasting *Twenty-ninth of February*, we have the principle in its naked state: some old Woodcutter or Forester has fallen into deadly sin with his wife's sister, long ago, on that intercalary day; and so his whole progeny must, wittingly or unwittingly, proceed in incest and murder; the day of the catastrophe regularly occurring, every four years, on the same Twenty-ninth; till happily the whole are murdered, and there is an end. So likewise in the *Schuld* (Guilt), a much more ambitious performance, we have exactly the same doctrine of an anniversary; and the interest once more turns on that delicate business of murder and incest. In the *Albanäserinn* (Fair Albanese), again, which may have the credit, such as it is, of being Müllner's best Play, we find the Fate-theory a little colored; as if the drug had begun to disgust, and the Doctor would hide it in a spoonful of syrup: it is a dying man's curse that operates on the criminal; which curse, being strengthened by a sin of very old standing in the family of the cursee, takes singular effect; the parties only weathering parricide, fratricide, and the old story of incest, by two self-banishments, and two very decisive self-murders. Nay, it seems as if our Doctor positively could not act at all without this Fate-panacea: in *König Yngurd*, we might almost think that he had made such an attempt, and found that it would not do. This König Yngurd, an imaginary Peasant-King of Norway, is meant, as we are kindly informed, to present us with some adumbration of Napoleon Bonaparte; and truly, for the two or three first Acts, he goes along with no small gallantry, in what drill-sergeants call a dashing or swashing style; a very virtuous kind of man, and as bold as Ruy Diaz or the Warwick Mastiff: when suddenly in the middle of a battle, far on in the Play, he is seized with some caprice, or whimsical qualm; retires to a solitary place among rocks, and there in a most gratuitous manner, delivers himself over, *viva voce*, to the Devil; who, indeed, does not appear personally to take seisin of him, but yet, as afterwards comes to light, has with great readiness accepted the gift. For now Yngurd grows dreadfully sulky and wicked, does little henceforth but bully men and kill them; till at length, the measure of his iniquities being full, he himself is bullied and killed; and the

Author, carried through by this his sovereign tragic elixir, contrary to expectation, terminates his piece with reasonable comfort.

This, then, is Dr. Müllner's dramatic mystery; this is the one patent hook by which he would hang his clay tragedies on the upper spiritual world; and so establish for himself a free communication, almost as if by block-and-tackle, between the visible Prose Earth and the invisible Poetic Heaven. The greater or less merit of this his invention, or rather improvement, for Werner is the real patentee, has given rise, we understand, to extensive argument. The small deer of criticism seem to be much divided in opinion on this point; and the higher orders, as we have stated, declining to throw any light whatever on it, the subject is still mooting with great animation. For our own share, we confess that we incline to rank it, as a recipe for dramatic tears, a shade higher than the Page's split onion in the *Taming of the Shrew.* Craftily hid in the handkerchief, this onion was sufficient for the deception of Christopher Sly; in that way attaining its object; which also the Fate-invention seems to have done with the Christopher Slys of Germany, and these not one but many, and therefore somewhat harder to deceive. To this onion-superiority we think Dr. M. is fairly entitled; and with this it were, perhaps, good for him that he remained content.

Dr. Müllner's Fate-scheme has been attacked by certain of his traducers on the score of its hostility to the Christian religion. Languishing indeed should we reckon the condition of the Christian religion to be, could Dr. Müllner's play-joinery produce any perceptible effect on it. Nevertheless, we may remark, since the matter is in hand, that this business of Fate does seem to us nowise a Christian doctrine; not even a Mahometan or Heathen one. The *Fate* of the Greeks, though a false, was a lofty hypothesis, and harmonized sufficiently with the whole sensual and material structure of their theology: a ground of deepest black, on which that gorgeous phantasmagoria was fitly enough painted. Besides, with them the avenging Power dwelt, at least in its visible manifestations, among the high places of the earth; visiting only kingly houses and world criminals, from whom it might be supposed the world, but for such miraculous interferences, could have exacted no vengeance, or found no protection and purification. Never, that we recollect of, did the Erinnyes become mere sheriff's-officers, and Fate a justice of the peace, haling poor drudges to the treadmill for robbery of hen-roosts, or scattering the earth with steel-traps to keep down poaching. And *what* has all this to do with the revealed Providence of these days; that Power whose path is emphatically through the great deep; his doings and plans manifested, in completeness, not by the year or by the century, on individuals or on nations, but stretching through Eternity, and over the Infinitude which he rules and sustains?

But there needs no recourse to theological arguments for judging this Fate-tenet of Dr. Müllner's. Its value, as a dramatic principle, may be estimated, it seems to us, by this one consideration: that in these days no person of either sex in the slightest degree believes it; that Dr. Müllner himself does not believe it. We are not contending that fiction should become fact, or that no dramatic incident is genuine, unless it could be sworn to before a jury; but simply that fiction should not be falsehood and delirium. How shall any one, in the drama, or in poetry of any sort, present a consistent philosophy of life, which is the soul and ultimate essence of all poetry, if he and every mortal know that the whole moral basis of his ideal world is a lie? And is it other than a lie that man's life is, was or could be, grounded on this pettifogging principle of a Fate that pursues woodcutters and cowherds with miraculous visitations, on stated days of the month? Can we, with any profit, hold the mirror up to Nature in this wise? When our mirror is no mirror, but only as it were a nursery saucepan, and that long since grown rusty?

We might add, were it of any moment in this case, that we reckon Dr. Müllner's tragic knack altogether insufficient for a still more comprehensive reason; simply for the reason that it *is* a knack, a recipe, or secret of the craft, which, could it be never so excellent, must by repeated use degenerate into a mannerism, and therefore into a nuisance. But herein lies the difference between creation and manufacture: the latter has its manipulations, its secret processes, which can be learned by apprenticeship; the former has not. For in poetry we have heard of no secret possessing the smallest effectual virtue, except this one general secret: that the poet be a man of a purer, higher, richer nature than other men; which higher nature shall itself, after earnest inquiry, have taught him the proper form for embodying its inspirations, as indeed the imperishable beauty of these will shine, with more or less distinctness, through any form whatever.

Had Dr. Müllner any visible pretension to this last great secret, it might be a duty to dwell longer and more gravely on his minor ones, however false and poor. As he has no such pretension, it appears to us that for the present we may take our leave. To give any farther analysis of his individual dramas would be an easy task, but a stupid and thankless one. A Harrison's watch, though this too is but an earthly machine, may be taken asunder with some prospect of scientific advantage; but who would spend time in screwing and unscrewing the mechanism of ten pepper-mills? Neither shall we offer any extract, as a specimen of the diction and sentiment that reigns in these dramas. We have said already that it is fair, well-ordered stage-sentiment, this of his; that the diction too is good, well-scanned, grammatical diction; no fault to be found with either, except that they pretend to be poetry, and are throughout the most unadulterated prose. To exhibit this fact in extracts would be a vain undertaking. Not the few sprigs of heath, but the thousand acres of it, characterize the wilderness. Let any one who covets a trim heath-nosegay, clutch at random into Müllner's Seven Volumes: for ourselves, we would not deal farther in that article.

Besides his dramatic labors, Dr. Müllner is known to the public as a journalist. For some considerable time he has edited a Literary Newspaper of his own originating, the *Mitternacht-Blatt* (Midnight Paper); stray leaves of which we occasionally look into. In this last capacity, we are happy to observe, he shows to much more advantage: indeed, the journalistic office seems quite natural to him; and would he take any advice from us, which he will not, here were the arena in which, and not in the Fate-drama, he would exclusively continue to fence, for his bread or glory. He is not without a vein of small wit; a certain degree of drollery there is, of grinning half-risible, half-impudent; he has a fair hand at the feebler sort of lampoon; the German Joe Millers also seem familiar to him, and his skill in the riddle is respectable; so that altogether, as we said, he makes a superior figure in this line, which indeed is but despicably managed in Germany; and his *Mitternacht-Blatt* is, by several degrees, the most readable paper of its kind we meet with in that country. Not that we, in the abstract, much admire Dr. Müllner's newspaper procedure; his style is merely the common tavern-style, familiar enough in our own periodical literature; riotous, blustering, with some tincture of blackguardism; a half-dishonest style, and smells considerably of tobacco and spirituous liquor. Neither do we find that there is the smallest fraction of valuable knowledge or opinion communicated in the Midnight Paper; indeed, except it be the knowledge and opinion that Dr. Müllner *is* a great dramatist, and that all who presume to think otherwise are insufficient members of society, we cannot charge our memory with having gathered any knowledge from it whatever. It may be too, that Dr. Müllner is not perfectly original in his journalistic manner: we have sometimes felt as if his light were, to a certain extent, a borrowed one; a rush-light kindled at the great pitch-link of our own *Blackwood's Magazine.* But on this point we cannot take upon us to decide.

One of Müllner's regular journalistic articles is the *Kriegszeitung,* or War-intelligence, of all the paper-battles, feuds, defiances and private assassinations, chiefly dramatic, which occur in the more distracted portion of the German Literary Republic. This *Kriegszeitung* Dr. Müllner evidently writes with great gusto, in a lively braggadocio manner, especially when touching on his own exploits; yet to us it is far the most melancholy part of the *Mitternacht-Blatt.* Alas, this is not what we search for in a German newspaper; how "Herr Sapphir," or Herr Carbuncle, or so many other Herren Dousterswivel, are all busily molesting one another! We ourselves are pacific men; make a point "to shun discrepant circles rather than seek them:" and how sad is it to hear of so many illustrious-obscure persons living in foreign parts, and hear only, what was well known without hearing, that they also are instinct with the spirit of Satan! For what is the bone that these Journalists, in Berlin and elsewhere, are worrying over; what is the ultimate purpose of all this barking and snarling? Sheer love of fight, you would say; simply to make one another's life a *little* bitterer; as if Fate had not been cross enough to the happiest of them. Were there any perceptible subject of dispute, *any* doctrine to advocate, even a false one, it would be something; but, so far as we can discover, whether from Sapphire and Company, or the "Nabob of Weissenfels" (our own worthy Doctor), there is none. And is this their appointed function? Are Editors scattered over the country, and supplied with victuals and fuel, purely to bite one another? Certainly not. But these Journalists, we think, are like the Academician's colony of spiders. This French virtuoso had found that cobwebs were worth something, that they could even be woven into silk stockings: whereupon he exhibits a very handsome pair of cobweb hose to the Academy, is encouraged to proceed with the manufacture; and so collects some half-bushel of spiders, and puts them down in a spacious loft, with every convenience for making silk. But will the vicious creatures spin a thread? In place of it, they take to fighting with their whole vigor, in contempt of the poor Academician's utmost exertions to part them; and end not, till there is simply one spider left living, and not a shred of cobweb woven, or thenceforth to be expected! Could the weavers of paragraphs, like these of the cobweb, fairly exterminate and silence one another, it would perhaps be a little more supportable. But an Editor is made of sterner stuff. In general cases, indeed, when the brains are out the man will die: but it is a well-known fact in Journalistics, that a man may not only live, but support wife and children by his labors in this line, years after the brain (if there ever was any) has been completely abstracted, or reduced by time and hard usage into a state of dry powder.

What, then, is to be done? Is there no end to this brawling; and will the unprofitable noise endure forever? By way of palliative, we have sometimes imagined that a Congress of all German Editors might be appointed, by proclamation, in some central spot, say the Nürnberg Market-place, if it would hold them all: here we would humbly suggest that the whole *Journalistik* might assemble on a given day, and under the eye of proper marshals, sufficiently and satisfactorily horsewhip one another, simultaneously, each his neighbor, till the very toughest had enough both of whipping and of being whipped. In this way, it seems probable, little or no injustice would be done; and each Journalist, cleared of gall for several months, might return home in a more composed frame of mind, and betake himself with new alacrity to the real duties of his office.

But enough! enough! The humor of these men may be infectious: it is not good for us to be here. Wandering over the Elysian Fields of German Literature, not watching the gloomy discords of its Tartarus, is what we wish to be employed in. Let the iron gate again close, and shut in the pallid kingdoms from view: we gladly revisit the upper air. Not in despite towards the German nation, which we love honestly, have we spoken thus of these its Playwrights and Journalists. Alas, when we look around us at home, we feel too well that the Germans might say to us: Neighbor, sweep thy own floor! Neither is it with any hope of bettering the existence of these three individual Poetasters, still less with the smallest shadow of wish to make it more miserable, that we have spoken. After all, there must be Playwrights, as we have said; and these are among the best of the class. So long as it pleases them to manufacture in this line, and any body of German Thebans to pay them in *groschen* or plaudits for their ware, let both parties persist in so doing, and fair befall them! But the duty of Foreign Reviewers is of a twofold sort. For not only are we stationed on the coast of the country, as watchers and spials, to report whatsoever remarkable thing becomes visible in the distance; but we stand there also as a sort of Tide-waiters and Preventive-service men, to contend, with our utmost vigor, that no improper article be landed. These offices, it would seem, as in the material world, so also in the literary and spiritual, usually fall to the lot of aged, invalided, impoverished, or otherwise decayed persons; but that is little to the matter. As true British subjects, with ready will, though it may be with our last strength, we are here to discharge that double duty. Movements, we observe, are making along the beach, and signals out seawards, as if these Klingemanns and Müllners were to be landed on our soil: but through the strength of heaven this shall not be done, till the "most thinking people" know what it *is* that is landing. For the rest, if any one wishes to import that sort of produce, and finds it nourishing for his inward man, let him do so, and welcome. Only let him understand that it is not German Literature he is swallowing, but the froth and scum of German Literature; which scum, if he will only wait, we can farther promise him that he may, ere long, enjoy in the new, and perhaps cheaper form of *sediment*. And so let every one be active for himself: —

> *"Noch ist es Tag, da rühre sich der Mann;*
> *Die Nacht tritt ein, wo niemand wirken kann."*

VOLTAIRE.[1]

[1829.]

Could ambition always choose its own path, and were will in human undertakings synonymous with faculty, all truly ambitious men would be men of letters. Certainly, if we examine that love of power, which enters so largely into most practical calculations, nay which our Utilitarian friends have recognized as the sole end and origin, both motive and reward, of all earthly enterprises, animating alike the philanthropist, the conqueror, the money-changer and the missionary, we shall find that all other arenas of ambition, compared with this rich and boundless one of Literature, meaning thereby whatever respects the promulgation of Thought, are poor, limited and ineffectual. For dull, unreflective, merely instinctive as the ordinary man may seem, he has nevertheless, as a quite indispensable appendage, a head that in some degree considers and computes; a lamp or rushlight of understanding has been given him, which, through whatever dim, besmoked and strangely diffractive media it may shine, is the ultimate guiding light of his whole path: and here as well as there, now as at all times in man's history, Opinion rules the world.

Curious it is, moreover, to consider in this respect, how different appearance is from reality, and under what singular shape and circumstances the truly most important man of any given period might be found. Could some Asmodeus, by simply waving his arm, open asunder the meaning of the Present, even so far as the Future will disclose it, what a much more marvellous sight should we have, than that mere bodily one through the roofs of Madrid! For we know not what we are, any more than what we shall be. It is a high, solemn, almost awful thought for every individual man, that his earthly influence, which has had a commencement, will never through all ages, were he the very meanest of us, have an end! What is done is done; has already blended itself with the boundless, ever-living, ever-working Universe, and will also work there, for good or for evil, openly or secretly, throughout all time. But the life of every man is as the wellspring of a stream, whose small beginnings are indeed plain to all, but whose ulterior course and destination, as it winds through the expanses of infinite years, only the Omniscient can discern. Will it mingle with neighboring rivulets, as a tributary; or receive them as their sovereign? Is it to be a nameless brook, and will its tiny waters, among millions of other brooks and rills, increase the current of some world-river? Or is it to be itself a Rhene or Danaw, whose goings-forth are to the uttermost lands, its flood an everlasting boundary-line on the globe itself, the bulwark and highway of whole kingdoms and continents? We know not; only in either case, we know, its path is to the great ocean; its waters, were they but a handful, are *here,* and cannot be annihilated or permanently held back.

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[1] Foreign Review, No. 6. — *Mémoires sur Voltaire et sur ses Ouvrages, par Longchamp et Wagnière, ses Secrétaires; suivis de divers Ecrits inédits de la Marquise du Châtelet, du Président Hénault, &c. tous relatifs à Voltaire.* (Memoirs concerning Voltaire and his Works, by Longchamp and Wagnière, his Secretaries; with various unpublished Pieces by the Marquise du Châtelet, &c. all relating to Voltaire.) 2 tomes. Paris, 1826.

As little can we prognosticate, with any certainty, the future influences from the present aspects of an individual. How many Demagogues, Crœsuses, Conquerors fill their own age with joy or terror, with a tumult that promises to be perennial; and in the next age die away into insignificance and oblivion! These are the forests of gourds, that overtop the infant cedars and aloe-trees, but, like the Prophet's gourd, wither on the third day. What was it to the Pharaohs of Egypt, in that old era, if Jethro the Midianitish priest and grazier accepted the Hebrew outlaw as his herdsman? Yet the Pharaohs, with all their chariots of war, are buried deep in the wrecks of time; and that Moses still lives, not among his own tribe only, but in the hearts and daily business of all civilized nations. Or figure Mahomet, in his youthful years, "travelling to the horse-fairs of Syria." Nay, to take an infinitely higher instance: who has ever forgotten those lines of Tacitus; inserted as a small, transitory, altogether trifling circumstance in the history of such a potentate as Nero? To us it is the most earnest, sad and sternly significant passage that we know to exist in writing: *Ergo abolendo rumori Nero subdidit reos, et quæsitissimis pœnis affecit, quos per flagitia invisos, vulgus* CHRISTIANOS *appellabat. Auctor nominis ejus* CHRISTUS, *qui, Tiberio imperitante, per Procuratorem Pontium Pilatum supplicio affectus erat. Repressaque in præsens exitiabilis superstitio rursus erumpebat, non modo per Judæam originem ejus mali, sed per urbem etiam, quo cuncta undique atrocia aut pudenda confluunt celebranturque.* "So, for the quieting of this rumor,[1] Nero judicially charged with the crime, and punished with most studied severities, that class, hated for their general wickedness, whom the vulgar called *Christians.* The originator of that name was one *Christ,* who, in the reign of Tiberius, suffered death by sentence of the Procurator, Pontius Pilate. The baneful superstition, thereby repressed for the time, again broke out, not only over Judea, the native soil of that mischief, but in the City also, where from every side all atrocious and abominable things collect and flourish."[2] Tacitus was the wisest, most penetrating man of his generation; and to such depth, and no deeper, has he seen into this transaction, the most important that has occurred or can occur in the annals of mankind.

Nor is it only to those primitive ages, when religions took their rise, and a man of pure and high mind appeared not merely as a teacher and philosopher, but as a priest and prophet, that our observation applies. The same uncertainty, in estimating present things and men, holds more or less in all times; for in all times, even in those which seem most trivial, and open to research, human society rests on inscrutably deep foundations; which he is of all others the most mistaken, who fancies he has explored to the bottom. Neither is that sequence, which we love to speak of as "a chain of causes," properly to be figured as a "chain" or line, but rather as a tissue, or superficies of innumerable lines, extending in breadth as well as in length, and with a complexity, which will foil and utterly bewilder the most assiduous computation. In fact, the wisest of us must, for by far the most part, judge like the simplest; estimate importance by mere magnitude, and expect that what strongly affects our own generation will strongly affect those that are to follow. In this way it is that Conquerors and political Revolutionists come to figure as so mighty in their influences; whereas truly there is no class of persons creating such an uproar in the world, who in the long-run produce so very slight an impression on its affairs. When Tamerlane had finished building his pyramid of seventy thousand human skulls, and was seen "standing at the gate of Damascus, glittering in steel, with his battle-axe on his shoulder," till his fierce hosts filed out to new victories and new carnage, the pale on-looker might have fancied that Nature was in her death-throes; for havoc and despair had taken possession of the earth, the sun of manhood seemed setting in seas of blood. Yet, it might be, on that very gala-day of Tamerlane, a little boy was playing ninepins on the streets of Mentz, whose history was more important to men than that of twenty Tamerlanes. The Tartar Khan, with his shaggy demons of the wilderness, "passed away like a whirlwind," to be forgotten forever; and that German artisan has wrought a benefit, which is yet immeasurably expanding itself, and will continue to expand itself through all countries and through all times. What are the conquests and expeditions of the whole corporation of captains, from Walter the Penniless to Napoleon Bonaparte, compared with these "movable types" of Johannes Faust?

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[1] Of his having set fire to Rome.

[2] Tacit. *Annal.* xv. 44.

Truly it is a mortifying thing for your Conqueror to reflect, how perishable is the metal which he hammers with such violence: how the kind earth will soon shroud up his bloody footprints; and all that he achieved and skilfully piled together will be but like his own "canvas city" of a camp,—this evening loud with life, to-morrow all struck and vanished, "a few earth-pits and heaps of straw!" For here, as always, it continues true, that the deepest force is the stillest; that, as in the Fable, the mild shining of the sun shall silently accomplish what the fierce blustering of the tempest has in vain essayed. Above all, it is ever to be kept in mind, that not by material, but by moral power, are men and their actions governed. How noiseless is thought! No rolling of drums, no tramp of squadrons, or immeasurable tumult of baggage-wagons, attends its movements: in what obscure and sequestered places may the head be meditating, which is one day to be crowned with more than imperial authority; for Kings and Emperors will be among its ministering servants; it will rule not over, but *in*, all heads, and with these its solitary combinations of ideas, as with magic formulas, bend the world to its will! The time may come, when Napoleon himself will be better known for his laws than for his battles; and the victory of Waterloo prove less momentous than the opening of the first Mechanics' Institute.

We have been led into such rather trite reflections, by these Volumes of *Memoirs on Voltaire;* a man in whose history the relative importance of intellectual and physical power is again curiously evinced. This also was a private person, by birth nowise an elevated one; yet so far as present knowledge will enable us to judge, it may be said that to abstract Voltaire and his activity from the eighteenth century, were to produce a greater difference in the existing figure of things, than the want of any other individual, up to this day, could have occasioned. Nay, with the single exception of Luther, there is perhaps, in these modern ages, no other man of a merely intellectual character, whose influence and reputation have become so entirely European as that of Voltaire. Indeed, like the great German Reformer's, his doctrines too, almost from the first, have affected not only the belief of the thinking world, silently propagating themselves from mind to mind; but in a high degree also, the conduct of the active and political world; entering as a distinct element into some of the most fearful civil convulsions which European history has on record.

Doubtless, to his own contemporaries, to such of them at least as had any insight into the actual state of men's minds, Voltaire already appeared as a noteworthy and decidedly historical personage: yet, perhaps, not the wildest of his admirers ventured to assign him such a magnitude as he now figures in, even with his adversaries and detractors. He has grown in apparent importance, as we receded from him, as the nature of his endeavors became more and more visible in their results. For, unlike many great men, but like all great agitators, Voltaire everywhere shows himself emphatically as the man of his century: uniting in his own person whatever spiritual accomplishments were most valued by that age; at the same time, with no depth to discern its ulterior tendencies, still less with any magnanimity to attempt withstanding these, his greatness and his littleness alike fitted him to produce an immediate effect; for he leads whither the multitude was of itself dimly minded to run, and keeps the van not less by skill in commanding, than by cunning in obeying. Besides, now that we look on the matter from some distance, the efforts of a thousand coadjutors and disciples, nay a series of mighty political vicissitudes, in the production of which these efforts had but a subsidiary share, have all come, naturally in such a case, to appear as if exclusively his work; so that he rises before us as the paragon and epitome of a whole spiritual period, now almost passed away, yet remarkable in itself, and more than ever interesting to us, who seem to stand, as it were, on the confines of a new and better one.

Nay, had we forgotten that ours is the "Age of the Press," when he who runs may not only read, but furnish us with reading; and simply counted the books, and scattered leaves, thick as the autumnal in Vallombrosa, that have been written and printed concerning this man, we might almost fancy him the most important person, not of the eighteenth century, but of all the centuries from Noah's Flood downwards. We have

Lives of Voltaire by friend and by foe: Condorcet, Duvernet, Lepan, have each given us a whole; portions, documents and all manner of authentic or spurious contributions have been supplied by innumerable hands; of which we mention only the labors of his various Secretaries: Collini's, published some twenty years ago, and now these Two massive Octavos from Longchamp and Wagnière. To say nothing of the Baron de Grimm's Collections, unparalleled in more than one respect; or of the six-and-thirty volumes of scurrilous eavesdropping, long since printed under the title of *Mémoires de Bachaumont;* or of the daily and hourly attacks and defences that appeared separately in his lifetime, and all the judicial pieces, whether in the style of apotheosis or of excommunication, that have seen the light since then; a mass of fugitive writings, the very diamond edition of which might fill whole libraries. The peculiar talent of the French in all narrative, at least in all anecdotic departments, rendering most of these works extremely readable, still farther favored their circulation both at home and abroad: so that now, in most countries, Voltaire has been read of and talked of, till his name and life have grown familiar like those of a village acquaintance. In England, at least, where for almost a century the study of foreign literature has, we may say, confined itself to that of the French, with a slight intermixture from the elder Italians, Voltaire's writings, and such writings as treated of him, were little likely to want readers. We suppose, there is no literary era, not even any domestic one, concerning which Englishmen in general have such information, at least have gathered so many anecdotes and opinions, as concerning this of Voltaire. Nor have native additions to the stock been wanting, and these of a due variety in purport and kind: maledictions, expostulations and dreadful death-scenes painted like Spanish *Sanbenitos*, by weak well-meaning persons of the hostile class; eulogies, generally of a gayer sort, by open or secret friends: all this has been long and extensively carried on among us. There is even an English *Life of Voltaire;*[1] nay we remember to have seen portions of his writings cited *in terrorem,* and with criticisms, in some pamphlet, "by a country gentleman," either on the Education of the People, or else on the question of Preserving the Game.

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[1] "By Frank Hall Standish, Esq." (London, 1821); a work which we can recommend only to such as feel themselves in extreme want of information

With the "Age of the Press," and such manifestations of it on this subject, we are far from quarrelling. We have read great part of these thousand-and-first "Memoirs on Voltaire," by Longchamp and Wagnière, not without satisfaction; and can cheerfully look forward to still other "Memoirs" following in their train. Nothing can be more in the course of Nature than the wish to satisfy one's self with knowledge of all sorts about any distinguished person, especially of our own era; the true study of his character, his spiritual individuality and peculiar manner of existence, is full of instruction for all mankind: even that of his looks, sayings, habitudes and indifferent actions, were not the records of them generally lies, is rather to be commended; nay are not such lies themselves, when they keep within bounds, and the subject of them has been dead for some time, equal to snipe-shooting, or Colburn-Novels, at least little inferior, in the great art of getting done with life, or, as it is technically called, killing time? For our own part, we say: Would that every Johnson in the world had his veridical Boswell, or leash of Boswells! We could then tolerate his Hawkins also, though not veridical. With regard to Voltaire, in particular, it seems to us not only innocent but profitable that the whole truth regarding him should be well understood. Surely the biography of such a man, who, to say no more of him, spent his best efforts, and as many still think, successfully, in assaulting the Christian religion, must be a matter of considerable import; what he did, and what he could not do; how he did it, or attempted it, that is, with what degree of strength, clearness, especially with what moral intents, what

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on this subject, and except in their own language unable to acquire any. It is written very badly, though with sincerity, and not without considerable indications of talent; to all appearance, by a minor; many of whose statements and opinions (for he seems an inquiring, honest-hearted, rather decisive character) must have begun to astonish even himself, several years ago.

theories and feelings on man and man's life, are questions that will bear some discussing. To Voltaire individually, for the last fifty-one years, the discussion has been indifferent enough; and to us it is a discussion not on one remarkable person only, and chiefly for the curious or studious, but involving considerations of highest moment to all men, and inquiries which the utmost compass of our philosophy will be unable to embrace.

Here, accordingly, we are about to offer some farther observations on this *quæstio vexata;* not without hope that the reader may accept them in good part. Doubtless, when we look at the whole bearings of the matter, there seems little prospect of any unanimity respecting it, either now, or within a calculable period: it is probable that many will continue for a long time to speak of this "universal genius," this "apostle of Reason," and "father of sound Philosophy;" and many again, of this "monster of impiety," this "sophist," and "atheist," and "ape-demon;" or, like the late Dr. Clarke of Cambridge, dismiss him more briefly with information that he is "a driveller:" neither is it essential that these two parties should, on the spur of the instant, reconcile themselves herein. Nevertheless, truth is better than error, were it only "on Hannibal's vinegar." It may be expected that men's opinions concerning Voltaire, which is of some moment, and concerning Voltairism, which is of almost boundless moment, will, if they cannot meet, gradually at every new comparison approach towards meeting; and what is still more desirable, towards meeting somewhere nearer the truth than they actually stand.

With honest wishes to promote such approximation, there is one condition, which above all others in this inquiry we must beg the reader to impose on himself: the duty of fairness towards Voltaire, of tolerance towards him, as towards all men. This, truly, is a duty which we have the happiness to hear daily inculcated; yet which, it has been well said, no mortal is at bottom disposed to practise. Nevertheless, if we really desire to understand the truth on any subject, not merely, as is much more common, to confirm our already existing opinions, and gratify this and the other pitiful claim of vanity or malice in respect of it, tolerance may be regarded as the most indispensable of all prerequisites; the condition, indeed, by which alone any real progress in the question becomes possible. In respect of our fellow-men, and all real insight into their characters, this is especially true. No character, we may affirm, was ever rightly understood till it had first been regarded with a certain feeling, not of tolerance only, but of sympathy. For here, more than in any other case, it is verified that the heart sees farther than the head. Let us be sure, our enemy is *not* that hateful being we are too apt to paint him. His vices and basenesses lie combined in far other order before his own mind than before ours; and under colors which palliate them, may perhaps exhibit them as virtues. Were he the wretch of our imagining, his life would be a burden to himself: for it is not by bread alone that the basest mortal lives; a certain approval of conscience is equally essential even to physical existence; is the fine all-pervading cement by which that wondrous union, a Self, is held together. Since the man, therefore, is not in Bedlam, and has not shot or hanged himself, let us take comfort, and conclude that he is one of two things: either a vicious *dog* in man's guise, to be muzzled and mourned over, and greatly marvelled at; or a real *man*, and consequently not without moral worth, which is to be enlightened, and so far approved of. But to judge rightly of his character, we must learn to look at it, not less with his eyes, than with our own; we must learn to pity him, to see him as a fellow-creature, in a word, to love him; or his real spiritual nature will ever be mistaken by us. In interpreting Voltaire, accordingly, it will be needful to bear some things carefully in mind, and to keep many other things as carefully in abeyance. Let us forget that *our* opinions were ever assailed by him, or ever defended; that *we* have to thank him, or upbraid him, for pain or for pleasure; let us forget that we are Deists or Millennarians, Bishops or Radical Reformers, and remember only that we are men. This is a European subject, or there never was one; and must, if we would in the least comprehend it, be looked at neither from the parish belfry, nor any

Peterloo platform; but, if possible, from some natural and infinitely higher point of vision.

It is a remarkable fact, that throughout the last fifty years of his life Voltaire was seldom or never named, even by his detractors, without the epithet "great" being appended to him; so that, had the syllables suited such a junction, as they did in the happier case of *Charle-Magne*, we might almost have expected that, not *Voltaire*, but *Voltaire-ce-grand-homme* would be his designation with posterity. However, posterity is much more stinted in its allowances on that score; and a multitude of things remain to be adjusted, and questions of very dubious issue to be gone into, before such coronation-titles can be conceded with any permanence. The million, even the wiser part of them, are apt to lose their discretion, when "tumultuously assembled;" for a small object, near at hand, may subtend a large angle; and often a Pennenden Heath has been mistaken for a Field of Runnymede; whereby the couplet on that immortal Dalhousie proves to be the emblem of many a man's real fortune with the public:—

> "And thou, Dalhousie, the great God of War,
> Lieutenant-Colonel to the Earl of Mar;"

the latter end corresponding poorly with the beginning. To ascertain what was the true significance of Voltaire's history, both as respects himself and the world; what was his specific character and value as a man; what has been the character and value of his influence on society, of his appearance as an active agent in the culture of Europe: all this leads us into much deeper investigations; on the settlement of which, however, the whole business turns.

To our own view, we confess, on looking at Voltaire's life, the chief quality that shows itself is one for which *adroitness* seems the fitter name. Greatness implies several conditions, the existence of which in his case it might be difficult to demonstrate; but of his claim to this other praise there can be no disputing. Whatever be his aims, high or low, just or the contrary, he is, at all times and to the utmost degree, expert in pursuing them. It is to be observed, moreover, that his aims in general were not of a simple sort, and the attainment of them easy: few literary men have had a course so diversified with vicissitudes as Voltaire's. His life is not spent in a corner, like that of a studious recluse, but on the open theatre of the world; in an age full of commotion, when society is rending itself asunder, Superstition already armed for deadly battle against Unbelief; in which battle he himself plays a distinguished part. From his earliest years, we find him in perpetual communication with the higher personages of his time, often with the highest: it is in circles of authority, of reputation, at lowest of fashion and rank, that he lives and works. Ninon de l'Enclos leaves the boy a legacy to buy books; he is still young, when he can say of his supper companions, "We are all Princes or Poets." In after-life he exhibits himself in company or correspondence with all manner of principalities and powers, from Queen Caroline of England to the Empress Catherine of Russia, from Pope Benedict to Frederick the Great. Meanwhile, shifting from side to side of Europe, hiding in the country, or living sumptuously in capital cities, he quits not his pen; with which, as with some enchanter's rod, more potent than any king's sceptre, he turns and winds the mighty machine of European Opinion; approves himself, as his schoolmaster had predicted, the *Coryphée du Déisme;* and, not content with this elevation, strives, and nowise ineffectually, to unite with it a poetical, historical, philosophic and even scientific pre-eminence. Nay, we may add, a pecuniary one; for he speculates in the funds, diligently solicits pensions and promotions, trades to America, is long a regular victualling-contractor for armies; and thus, by one means and another, independently of literature which would never yield much money, raises his income from 800 francs a year to more than centuple that sum.[1] And now, having, besides all this commercial and economical business, written some thirty quartos, the most popular that were ever written, he returns after long exile to his native city, to be welcomed there almost as a religious idol; and closes a life, prosperous alike in the building of country-seats, and the composition of *Henriades* and *Philosophical Dictionaries*, by the most appropriate demise, — by drowning, as it were, in an ocean of applause; so that as he lived for fame, he may be said to have died of it.

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[1] See Tome ii. p. 328 of these *Mémoires.*

Such various, complete success, granted only to a small portion of men in any age of the world, presupposes at least, with every allowance for good fortune, an almost unrivalled expertness of management. There must have been a great talent of some kind at work here; a cause proportionate to the effect. It is wonderful, truly, to observe with what perfect skill Voltaire steers his course through so many conflicting circumstances: how he weathers this Cape Horn, darts lightly through that Mahlstrom; always either sinks his enemy, or shuns him; here waters, and careens, and traffics with the rich savages; there lies land-locked till the hurricane is overblown; and so, in spite of all billows, and sea-monsters, and hostile fleets, finishes his long Manilla voyage, with streamers flying, and deck piled with ingots! To say nothing of his literary character, of which this same dexterous address will also be found to be a main feature, let us glance only at the general aspect of his conduct, as manifested both in his writings and actions. By turns, and ever at the right season, he is imperious and obsequious; now shoots abroad, from the mountain-tops, Hyperion-like, his keen innumerable shafts; anon, when danger is advancing, flies to obscure nooks; or, if taken in the fact, swears it was but in sport, and that he is the peaceablest of men. He bends to occasion; can, to a certain extent, blow hot or blow cold; and never attempts force, where cunning will serve his turn. The beagles of the Hierarchy and of the Monarchy, proverbially quick of scent and sharp of tooth, are out in quest of him; but this is a lion-fox which cannot be captured. By wiles and a thousand doublings, he utterly distracts his pursuers; he can burrow in the earth, and all trace of him is gone.[1] With a strange system of anonymity and publicity, of denial and assertion, of Mystification in all senses, has Voltaire surrounded himself. He can raise no standing armies for his defence, yet he too is a "European Power," and not undefended; an invisible, impregnable, though hitherto unrecognized bulwark, that of Public Opinion, defends him. With great art, he maintains this stronghold; though ever and anon sallying out from it, far beyond the permitted limits. But he has his coat of darkness, and his shoes of swiftness, like that other Killer of Giants. We find Voltaire a supple courtier, or a sharp satirist; he can talk blasphemy, and build churches, according to the signs of the times. Frederick the Great is not too high for his diplomacy, nor the poor Printer of his *Zadig* too low;[1] he manages the Cardinal Fleuri, and the Curé of St. Sulpice; and laughs in his sleeve at all the world. We should pronounce him to be one of the best politicians on record; as we have said, the *adroitest* of all literary men.

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[1] Of one such "taking to cover" we have a curious and rather ridiculous account in this Work, by Longchamp. It was with the Duchess du Maine that he sought shelter, and on a very slight occasion: nevertheless he had

At the same time, Voltaire's worst enemies, it seems to us, will not deny that he had naturally a keen sense for rectitude, indeed for all virtue: the utmost vivacity of temperament characterizes him; his quick susceptibility for every form of beauty is moral as well as intellectual. Nor was his practice without indubitable and highly creditable proofs of this. To the help-needing he was at all times a ready benefactor: many were the hungry adventurers who profited of his bounty, and then bit the hand that had fed them. If we enumerate his generous acts, from the case of the Abbé Desfontaines down to that of the Widow Calas, and the Serfs of Saint Claude, we shall find that few private men have had so wide a circle of charity, and have watched over it so well. Should it be objected that love of reputation entered largely into these proceedings, Voltaire can afford a handsome deduction on that head: should the uncharitable even calculate that love of

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to lie perdue, for two months, at the Castle of Sceaux; and, with closed windows, and burning candles in daylight, compose *Zadig*, *Babouc*, *Memnon*, *&c.* for his amusement.

[1] See in Longchamp (pp. 154–163) how, by natural legerdemain, a knave may be caught, and the *change rendu à des imprimeurs infidèles.*

reputation was the sole motive, we can only remind them that love of *such* reputation is itself the effect of a social, humane disposition; and wish, as an immense improvement, that all men were animated with it. Voltaire was not without his experience of human baseness; but he still had a fellow-feeling for human sufferings; and delighted, were it only as an honest luxury, to relieve them. His attachments seem remarkably constant and lasting: even such sots as Thiriot, whom nothing but habit could have endeared to him, he continues, and after repeated injuries, to treat and regard as friends. Of his equals we do not observe him envious, at least not palpably and despicably so; though this, we should add, might be in him, who was from the first so paramountly popular, no such hard attainment. Against Montesquieu, perhaps against him alone, he cannot help entertaining a small secret grudge; yet ever in public he does him the amplest justice; *l'Arlequin-Grotius* of the fireside becomes, on all grave occasions, the author of the *Esprit des Lois.* Neither to his enemies, and even betrayers, is Voltaire implacable or meanly vindictive: the instant of their submission is also the instant of his forgiveness; their hostility itself provokes only casual sallies from him; his heart is too kindly, indeed too light, to cherish any rancor, any continuation of revenge. If he has not the virtue to forgive, he is seldom without the prudence to forget: if, in his life-long contentions, he cannot treat his opponents with any magnanimity, he seldom, or perhaps never once, treats them quite basely; seldom or never with that absolute unfairness, which the law of retaliation might so often have seemed to justify. We would say that, if no heroic, he is at all times a perfectly civilized man; which, considering that his war was with exasperated theologians, and a "war to the knife" on their part, may be looked upon as rather a surprising circumstance. He exhibits many minor virtues, a due appreciation of the highest; and fewer faults than, in his situation, might have been expected, and perhaps pardoned.

All this is well, and may fit out a highly expert and much-esteemed man of business, in the widest sense of that term; but is still far from constituting a "great character." In fact, there is one deficiency in Voltaire's original structure, which, it appears to us, must be quite fatal to such claims for him: we mean his inborn levity of nature, his entire want of Earnestness. Voltaire was by birth a Mocker, and light *Pococurante;* which natural disposition his way of life confirmed into a predominant, indeed all-pervading habit. Far be it from us to say, that solemnity is an essential of greatness; that no great man can have other than a rigid vinegar aspect of countenance, never to be thawed or warmed by billows of mirth! There are things in this world to be laughed at, as well as things to be admired; and his is no complete mind, that cannot give to each sort its due. Nevertheless, contempt is a dangerous element to sport in; a deadly one, if we habitually live in it. How, indeed, to take the lowest view of this matter, shall a man accomplish great enterprises; enduring all toil, resisting temptation, laying aside every weight,— unless he zealously love what he pursues? The faculty of love, of admiration, is to be regarded as the sign and the measure of high souls: unwisely directed, it leads to many evils; but without it, there cannot be any good. Ridicule, on the other hand, is indeed a faculty much prized by its possessors; yet, intrinsically, it is a small faculty; we may say, the smallest of all faculties that other men are at the pains to repay with any esteem. It is directly opposed to Thought, to Knowledge, properly so called; its nourishment and essence is Denial, which hovers only on the surface, while Knowledge dwells far below. Moreover, it is by nature selfish and morally trivial; it cherishes nothing but our Vanity, which may in general be left safely enough to shift for itself. Little "discourse of reason," in any sense, is implied in Ridicule: a scoffing man is in no lofty mood, for the time; shows more of the imp than of the angel. This too when his scoffing is what we call just, and has some foundation on truth; while again the laughter of fools, that vain sound said in Scripture to resemble the "crackling of thorns under the pot" (which they cannot heat, but only soil and begrime), must be regarded, in these latter times, as a very serious addition to the sum of human wretchedness; nor perhaps will it always,— when the

"Increase of Crime in the Metropolis" comes to be debated again, — escape the vigilance of Parliament as hitherto.

We have, oftener than once, endeavored to attach some meaning to that aphorism, vulgarly imputed to Shaftesbury, which, however, we can find nowhere in his works, that *ridicule is the test of truth.* But of all chimeras that ever advanced themselves in the shape of philosophical doctrines, this is to us the most formless and purely inconceivable. Did or could the unassisted human faculties ever understand it, much more believe it? Surely, so far as the common mind can discern, laughter seems to depend not less on the laugher than on the laughee: and now, who gave laughers a patent to be always just, and always omniscient? If the philosophers of Nootka Sound were pleased to laugh at the manœuvres of Cook's seamen, did that render these manœuvres useless; and were the seamen to stand idle, or to take to leather canoes, till the laughter abated? Let a discerning public judge.

But, leaving these questions for the present, we may observe at least that all great men have been careful to subordinate this talent or habit of ridicule; nay, in the ages which we consider the greatest, most of the arts that contribute to it have been thought disgraceful for freemen, and confined to the exercise of slaves. With Voltaire, however, there is no such subordination visible: by nature, or by practice, mockery has grown to be the irresistible bias of his disposition; so that for him, in all matters, the first question is, not what is true, but what is false; not what is to be loved, and held fast, and earnestly laid to heart, but what is to be contemned, and derided, and sportfully cast out of doors. Here truly he earns abundant triumph as an image-breaker, but pockets little real wealth. Vanity, with its adjuncts, as we have said, finds rich solacement; but for aught better there is not much. Reverence, the highest feeling that man's nature is capable of, the crown of his whole moral manhood, and precious, like fine gold, were it in the rudest forms, he seems not to understand, or have heard of even by credible tradition. The glory of knowing and believing is all but a stranger to him; only with that of questioning and qualifying is he familiar. Accordingly, he sees but a little way into Nature: the mighty All, in its beauty, and infinite mysterious grandeur, humbling the small *Me* into nothingness, has never even for moments been revealed to him; only this or that other atom of it, and the differences and discrepancies of these two, has he looked into and noted down. His theory of the world, his picture of man and man's life, is little; for a Poet and Philosopher, even pitiful. Examine it in its highest developments, you find it an altogether vulgar picture; simply a reflex, with more or fewer mirrors, of Self and the poor interests of Self. "The Divine Idea, that which lies at the bottom of Appearance," was never more invisible to any man. He reads History not with the eye of a devout seer, or even of a critic; but through a pair of mere anti-catholic spectacles. It is not a mighty drama, enacted on the theatre of Infinitude, with Suns for lamps, and Eternity as a background; whose author is God, and whose purport and thousand-fold moral lead us up to the "dark with excess of light" of the Throne of God; but a poor wearisome debating-club dispute, spun through ten centuries, between the *Encyclopédie* and the *Sorbonne.* Wisdom or folly, nobleness or baseness, are merely superstitious or unbelieving: God's Universe is a larger Patrimony of St. Peter, from which it were well and pleasant to hunt out the Pope.

In this way, Voltaire's nature, which was originally vehement rather than deep, came, in its maturity, in spite of all his wonderful gifts, to be positively shallow. We find no heroism of character in him, from first to last; nay there is not, that we know of, one great thought in all his six-and-thirty quartos. The high worth implanted in him by Nature, and still often manifested in his conduct, does not shine there like a light, but like a coruscation. The enthusiasm, proper to such a mind, visits him; but it has no abiding virtue in his thoughts, no local habitation and no name. There is in him a rapidity, but at the same time a pettiness; a certain violence, and fitful abruptness, which takes from him all dignity. Of his *emportemens,* and tragi-comical explosions, a thousand anecdotes are on record; neither is he, in these cases, a terrific volcano, but a mere bundle of rockets. He is nigh shooting poor Dorn, the Frankfort constable; actually fires a pistol, into the lobby, at him; and this, three days after that melancholy business of the "*Œuvre de Poéshie du Roi mon Maître*" had been finally adjusted. A bookseller, who, with the natural instinct of fallen mankind, overcharges him, receives from this Philosopher, by way of payment at sight, a slap on the face. Poor Longchamp, with considerable tact, and a praiseworthy air of second-table respectability, details various scenes of this kind: how Voltaire dashed away his combs, and maltreated his wig, and otherwise fiercely comported himself, the very first morning: how once, having a keenness of appetite, sharpened by walking and a diet of weak tea, he became uncommonly anxious for supper; and Clairaut and Madame du Châtelet, sunk in algebraic calculations, twice promised to come down, but still kept the dishes cooling, and the Philosopher at last desperately battered open their locked door with his foot; exclaiming, "*Vous êtes donc de concert pour me faire mourir?*" — And yet Voltaire had a true kindness of heart; all his domestics and dependents loved him, and continued with him. He has many elements of goodness, but floating loosely; nothing is combined in steadfast union. It is true, he presents in general a surface of smoothness, of cultured regularity; yet, under it, there is not the silent rock-bound strength of a World, but the wild tumults of a Chaos are ever bursting through. He is a man of power, but not of beneficent authority; we fear, but cannot reverence him; we feel him to be stronger, not higher.

Much of this spiritual shortcoming and perversion might be due to natural defect; but much of it also is due to the age into which he was cast. It was an age of discord and division; the approach of a grand crisis in human affairs. Already we discern in it all the elements of the French Revolution; and wonder, so easily do we forget how entangled and hidden the meaning of the present generally is to us, that all men did not foresee the comings-on of that fearful convulsion. On the one hand, a high all-attempting activity of Intellect; the most peremptory spirit of inquiry abroad on every subject; things human and things divine alike cited without misgivings before the same boastful tribunal of so-called Reason, which means here a merely argumentative Logic; the strong in mind excluded from his regular influence in the state, and deeply conscious of that injury. On the other hand, a privileged few, strong in the subjection of the many, yet in itself weak; a piebald, and for most part altogether decrepit battalion of Clergy, of purblind Nobility, or rather of Courtiers, for as yet the Nobility is mostly on the other side: these cannot fight with Logic, and the day of Persecution is well-nigh done. The whole force of law, indeed, is still in their hands; but the far deeper force, which alone gives efficacy to law, is hourly passing from them. Hope animates one side, fear the other; and the battle will be fierce and desperate. For there is wit without wisdom on the part of the self-styled Philosophers; feebleness with exasperation on the part of their opponents; pride enough on all hands, but little magnanimity; perhaps nowhere any pure love of truth, only everywhere the purest, most ardent love of self.

In such a state of things, there lay abundant principles of discord: these two influences hung like fast-gathering electric clouds, as yet on opposite sides of the horizon, but with a malignity of aspect, which boded, whenever they might meet, a sky of fire and blackness, thunder-bolts to waste the earth; and the sun and stars, though but for a season, to be blotted out from the heavens. For there is no conducting medium to unite softly these hostile elements; there is no true virtue, no true wisdom, on the one side or on the other. Never perhaps was there an epoch, in the history of the world, when universal corruption called so loudly for reform; and they who undertook that task were men intrinsically so worthless. Not by Gracchi but by Catilines, not by Luthers but by Aretines, was Europe to be renovated. The task has been a long and bloody one; and is still far from done.

In this condition of affairs, what side such a man as Voltaire was to take could not be doubtful. Whether he ought to have taken either side; whether he should not rather have stationed himself in the middle; the partisan of neither, perhaps hated by both; acknowledging and forwarding, and striving to reconcile, what truth was in each; and preaching forth a far deeper truth, which, if his own century had neglected it, had persecuted it, future centuries would have recognized as priceless: all this was another question. Of no man, however gifted, can we require what he has not to give: but Voltaire called himself Philosopher, nay *the* Philosopher. And such has often, indeed generally, been the fate of great men, and Lovers of Wisdom: their own age and country have treated them as of no account; in the great Corn-Exchange of the world, their pearls have seemed but spoiled barley, and been ignominiously rejected. Weak in adherents, strong only in their faith, in their indestructible consciousness of worth and well-doing, they have silently, or in words, appealed to coming ages, when their own ear would indeed be shut to the voice of love and of hatred, but the Truth that had dwelt in them would speak with a voice audible to all. Bacon left his works to future generations, when some centuries should have elapsed. "Is it much for me," said Kepler, in his isolation, and extreme need, "that men should accept my discovery? If the Almighty waited six thousand years for one to see what He had made, I may surely wait two hundred for one to understand what I have seen!" All this, and more, is implied in love of wisdom, in genuine seeking of truth: the noblest function that can be appointed for a man, but requiring also the noblest man to fulfil it.

With Voltaire, however, there is no symptom, perhaps there was no conception, of such nobleness; the high call for which indeed, in the existing state of things, his intellect may have had as little the force to discern, as his heart had the force to obey. He follows a simpler course. Heedless of remoter issues, he adopts the cause of his own party; of that class with whom he lived, and was most anxious to stand well: he enlists in their ranks, not without hopes that he may one day rise to be their general. A resolution perfectly accordant with his prior habits, and temper of mind; and from which his whole subsequent procedure, and moral aspect as a man, naturally enough evolves itself. Not that we would say, Voltaire was a mere prize-fighter; one of "Heaven's Swiss," contending for a cause which he only half, or not at all approved of. Far from it. Doubtless he loved truth, doubtless he partially felt himself to be advocating truth; nay we know not that he has ever yet, in a single instance, been convicted of wilfully perverting his belief; of uttering, in all his controversies, one deliberate falsehood. Nor should this negative praise seem an altogether slight one; for greatly were it to be wished that even the best of his better-intentioned opponents had always deserved the like. Nevertheless, his love of truth is not that deep infinite love, which beseems a Philosopher; which many ages have been fortunate enough to witness; nay, of which his own age had still some examples. It is a far inferior love, we should say, to that of poor Jean Jacques, half-sage, half-maniac as he was; it is more a prudent calculation than a passion. Voltaire loves Truth, but chiefly of the triumphant sort: we have no instance of his fighting for a quite discrowned and outcast Truth; it is chiefly when she walks abroad, in distress it may be, but still with queenlike insignia, and knighthoods and renown are to be earned in her battles, that he defends her, that he charges gallantly against the Cades and Tylers. Nay, at all times, belief itself seems, with him, to be less the product of Meditation than of Argument. His first question with regard to any doctrine, perhaps his final test of its worth and genuineness is: Can others be convinced of this? Can I truck it in the market for power? "To such questioners," it has been said, "Truth, who buys not, and sells not, goes on her way, and makes no answer."

In fact, if we inquire into Voltaire's ruling motive, we shall find that it was at bottom but a vulgar one: ambition, the desire of ruling, by such means as he had, over other men. He acknowledges no higher divinity than Public Opinion; for whatever he asserts or performs, the number of votes is the measure of strength and value. Yet let us be just to him; let us admit that he in some degree estimates his votes, as well as counts them. If love of fame, which, especially for such a man, we can only call another modification of Vanity, is always his ruling passion, he has a certain taste in gratifying it. His vanity, which cannot be extinguished, is ever skilfully concealed; even his just claims are never boisterously insisted on; throughout his whole life he shows no single feature of the quack. Nevertheless, even in the height of his glory, he has a strange sensitiveness to the judgment of the world: could he have contrived a Dionysius' Ear, in the Rue Traversière, we should have found him watching at it, night and day. Let but any little evil-disposed Abbé, any Fréron or Piron,

> "*Pauvre Piron, qui ne fut jamais rien,*
> *Pas même Académicien,*"

write a libel or epigram on him, what a fluster he is in! We grant he forbore much, in these cases; manfully consumed his own spleen, and sometimes long held his peace; but it was his part to have always done so. Why should such a man ruffle himself with the spite of exceeding small persons? Why not let these poor devils write; why should not they earn a dishonest penny, at his expense, if they had no readier way? But Voltaire cannot part with his "voices," his "most sweet voices:" for they are his gods; take these, and what has he left? Accordingly, in literature and morals, in all his comings and goings, we find him striving, with a religious care, to sail strictly with the wind. In Art, the Parisian *Parterre* is his court of last appeal: he consults the *Café de Procope*, on his wisdom or his folly, as if it were a Delphic Oracle. The following adventure belongs to his fifty-fourth year, when his fame might long have seemed abundantly established. We translate from the Sieur Longchamp's thin, half-roguish, mildly obsequious, most lackey-like Narrative:

"Judges could appreciate the merits of *Sémiramis,* which has continued on the stage, and always been seen there with pleasure. Every one knows how the two principal parts in this piece contributed to the celebrity of two great tragedians, Mademoiselle Dumèsnil and M. le Kain. The enemies of M. de Voltaire renewed their attempts in the subsequent representations; but it only the better confirmed his triumph. Piron, to console himself for the defeat of his party, had recourse to his usual remedy; pelting the piece with some paltry epigrams, which did it no harm.

"Nevertheless, M. de Voltaire, who always loved to correct his works, and perfect them, became desirous to learn, more specially and at first hand, what good or ill the public were saying of his Tragedy; and it appeared to him that he could nowhere learn it better than in the *Café de Procope*, which was also called the *Antre* (Cavern) *de Procope*, because it was very dark even in full day, and ill-lighted in the evenings; and because you often saw there a set of lank, sallow poets, who had somewhat the air of apparitions. In this Café, which fronts the *Comédie Française*, had been held, for more than sixty years, the tribunal of those self-called *Aristarchs*, who fancied they could pass sentence without appeal, on plays, authors and actors. M. de Voltaire wished to compear there, but in disguise and altogether *incognito*. It was on coming out from the playhouse that the judges usually proceeded thither, to open what they called their great sessions. On the second night of *Sémiramis* he borrowed a clergyman's clothes; dressed himself in cassock and long cloak: black stockings, girdle, bands, breviary itself; nothing was forgotten. He clapt on a large peruke, unpowdered, very ill-combed, which covered more than the half of his cheeks, and left nothing to be seen but the end of a long nose. The peruke was surmounted by a large three-cornered hat, corners half bruised in. In this equipment, then, the author of *Sémiramis* proceeded on foot to the *Café de Procope*, where he squatted himself in a corner; and waiting for the end of the play, called for a *bavaroise*, a small roll of bread and the Gazette. It was not long till those familiars of the *Parterre* and tenants of the *Café* stept in. They instantly began discussing the new Tragedy. Its partisans and its adversaries pleaded their cause with warmth; each giving his reasons. Impartial persons also spoke their sentiment; and repeated some fine verses of the piece. During all this time, M. de Voltaire, with spectacles on nose, head stooping over the Gazette which he pretended to be reading, was listening to the debate; profiting by reasonable observations, suffering much to hear very absurd ones, and not answer them, which irritated him. Thus, during an hour and a half, had he the courage and patience to hear *Sémiramis* talked of and babbled of, without speaking a word. At last, all these pretended judges of the fame of authors having gone their ways, without converting one another, M. de Voltaire also went off; took a coach in the Rue Mazarine, and returned home about eleven o'clock. Though I knew of his disguise, I confess I was struck and almost frightened to see him accoutred so. I took him for a spectre, or shade of Ninus, that was appearing to me; or, at least, for one of those ancient Irish debaters, arrived at the end of their career, after wearing themselves out in school-syllogisms. I helped him to doff all that apparatus, which I carried next morning to its true owner, — a Doctor of the Sorbonne."

This stroke of art, which cannot in anywise pass for sublime, might have its uses and rational purpose in one case, and only in one: if *Sémiramis* was meant to be a popular show, that was to live or die by its first impression on the idle multitude; which accordingly we must infer to have been its real, at least its chief destination. In any other case, we cannot but consider this Haroun-Alraschid visit to the *Café de Procope* as questionable, and altogether inadequate. If *Sémiramis* was a Poem, a living Creation, won from the empyrean by the silent power and long-continued Promethean toil of its author, what could the *Café de Procope* know of it, what could all Paris know of it, "on the second night"? Had it been a Milton's *Paradise Lost*, they might have despised it till after the fiftieth year! True, the object of the Poet is, and must be, to "instruct by pleasing," yet not by pleasing this man and that man; only by pleasing *man*, by speaking to the pure nature of man, can any real "instruction," in this sense, be conveyed. Vain does it seem to search for a judgment of this kind in the largest *Café* in the largest Kingdom, "on the second night." The deep, clear consciousness of one mind comes infinitely nearer it, than the loud outcry of a million that have no such consciousness; whose "talk," or whose "babble," but distracts the listener; and to most genuine Poets has, from of old, been in a great measure indifferent.

For the multitude of voices is no authority; a thousand voices may not, strictly examined, amount to one vote. Mankind in this world are divided into flocks, and follow their several bell-wethers. Now, it is well known, let the bell-wether rush through any gap, the rest rush after him, were it into bottomless quagmires. Nay, so conscientious are sheep in this particular, as a quaint naturalist and moralist has noted, "if you hold a stick before the wether, so that he is forced to vault in his passage, the whole flock will do the like when the stick is withdrawn; and the thousandth sheep shall be seen vaulting impetuously over air, as the first did over an otherwise impassable barrier!" A farther peculiarity which, in consulting Acts of Parliament, and other authentic records, not only as regards "Catholic Disabilities," but many other matters, you may find curiously verified in the human species also! — On the whole, we must consider this excursion to *Procope's* literary Cavern as illustrating Voltaire in rather pleasant style; but nowise much to his honor. Fame seems a far too high, if not the highest object with him; nay sometimes even popularity is clutched at: we see no heavenly polestar in this voyage of his; but only the guidance of a proverbially uncertain *wind.*

Voltaire reproachfully says of St. Louis, that he "ought to have been above his age;" but in his own case we can find few symptoms of such heroic superiority. The same perpetual appeal to his contemporaries, the same intense regard to reputation, as he viewed it, prescribes for him both his enterprises and his manner of conducting them. His aim is to please the more enlightened, at least the politer part of the world; and he offers them simply what they most wish for, be it in theatrical shows for their pastime, or in sceptical doctrines for their edification. For this latter purpose, Ridicule is the weapon he selects, and it suits him well. This was not the age of deep thoughts; no Duc de Richelieu, no Prince Conti, no Frederick the Great would have listened to such: only sportful contempt, and a thin conversational logic will avail. There may be wool-quilts, which the lath-sword of Harlequin will pierce, when the club of Hercules has rebounded from them in vain. As little was this an age for high virtues; no heroism, in any form, is required, or even acknowledged; but only, in all forms, a certain *bienséance*.

To this rule also Voltaire readily conforms; indeed, he finds no small advantage in it. For a lax public morality not only allows him the indulgence of many a little private vice, and brings him in this and the other windfall of *menus plaisirs*, but opens him the readiest resource in many enterprises of danger. Of all men, Voltaire has the least disposition to increase the Army of Martyrs. No testimony will he seal with his blood; scarcely any will he so much as sign with ink. His obnoxious doctrines, as we have remarked, he publishes under a thousand concealments; with underplots, and wheels within wheels; so that his whole track is in darkness, only his works see the light. No Proteus is so nimble, or assumes so many shapes: if, by rare chance, caught sleeping, he whisks through the smallest hole, and is out of sight, while the noose is getting ready. Let his judges take him to task, he will shuffle and evade; if directly questioned, he will even lie. In regard to this last point, the Marquis de Condorcet has set up a defence for him, which has at least the merit of being frank enough.

"The necessity of lying in order to disavow any work," says he, "is an extremity equally repugnant to conscience and nobleness of character: but the crime lies with those unjust men, who render such disavowal necessary to the safety of him whom they force to it. If you have made a crime of what is not one; if, by absurd or by arbitrary laws, you have infringed the natural right, which all men have, not only to form an opinion, but to render it public; then you deserve to lose the right which every man has of hearing the truth from the mouth of another; a right which is the sole basis of that rigorous obligation, not to lie. If it is not permitted to deceive, the reason is, that to deceive any one, is to do him a wrong, or expose yourself to do him one; but a wrong supposes a right; and no one has the right of seeking to secure himself the means of committing an injustice."[1]

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[1] *Vie de Voltaire*, p. 32.

It is strange, how scientific discoveries do maintain themselves: here, quite in other hands, and in an altogether different dialect, we have the old Catholic doctrine, if it ever was more than a Jesuitic one, "that faith need not be kept with heretics." Truth, it appears, is too precious an article for our enemies; is fit only for friends, for those who will pay us if we tell it them. It may be observed, however, that granting Condorcet's premises, this doctrine also must be granted, as indeed is usual with that sharp-sighted writer. If the doing of right depends on the receiving of it; if our fellow-men, in this world, are not persons, but mere things, that for services bestowed will return services, — steam-engines that will manufacture calico, if we put in coals and water, — then doubtless, the calico ceasing, our coals and water may also rationally cease; the questioner threatening to injure us for the truth, we may rationally tell him lies. But if, on the other hand, our fellow-man is no steam-engine, but a man; united with us, and with all men, and with the Maker of all men, in sacred, mysterious, indissoluble bonds, in an All-embracing Love, that encircles alike the seraph and the glow-worm; then will our duties to him rest on quite another basis than this very humble one of *quid pro quo;* and the Marquis de Condorcet's conclusion will be false; and might, in its practical extensions, be infinitely pernicious.

Such principles and habits, too lightly adopted by Voltaire, acted, as it seems to us, with hostile effect on his moral nature, not originally of the noblest sort, but which, under other influences, might have attained to far greater nobleness. As it is, we see in him simply a Man of the World, such as Paris and the eighteenth century produced and approved of: a polite, attractive, most cultivated, but essentially self-interested man; not without highly amiable qualities; indeed, with a general disposition which we could have accepted without disappointment in a mere Man of the World, but must find very defective, sometimes altogether out of place, in a Poet and Philosopher. Above this character of a Parisian "honorable man," he seldom or never rises; nay sometimes we find him hovering on the very lowest boundaries of it, or perhaps even fairly below it. We shall nowise accuse him of excessive regard for money, of any wish to shine by the influence of mere wealth: let those commercial speculations, including even the victualling-contracts, pass for laudable prudence, for love of independence, and of the power to do good. But what are we to make of that hunting after pensions, and even after mere titles? There is an assiduity displayed here, which sometimes almost verges towards sneaking. Well might it provoke the scorn of Alfieri; for there is nothing better than the spirit of "a French plebeian" apparent in it. Much, we know, very much should be allowed for difference of national manners, which in general mainly determine the meaning of such things: nevertheless, to our insular feelings, that famous *Trajan est-il content?* especially when we consider who the Trajan was, will always remain an unfortunate saying. The more so, as Trajan himself turned his back on it, without answer; declining, indeed, through life, to listen to the voice of this charmer, or disturb his own "*âme paisible*," for one moment, though with the best philosopher in Nature. Nay, Pompadour herself was applied to; and even some considerable progress made, by that underground passage, had not an envious hand too soon and fatally intervened. D'Alembert says, there are two things that can reach the top of a pyramid, the eagle and the reptile. Apparently, Voltaire wished to combine both methods; and he had with one of them but indifferent success.

The truth is, we are trying Voltaire by too high a standard, comparing him with an ideal, which he himself never strove after, perhaps never seriously aimed at. He is no great Man, but only a great *Persifleur;* a man for whom life, and all that pertains to it, has, at best, but a despicable meaning; who meets its difficulties not with earnest force, but with gay agility; and is found always at the top, less by power in swimming, than by lightness in floating. Take him in his character, forgetting that any other was ever ascribed to him, and we find that he enacted it almost to perfection. Never man better understood the whole secret of *Persiflage;* meaning thereby not only the external faculty of polite contempt, but that art of general inward contempt, by which a man of this sort endeavors to subject the circumstances of his Destiny to his Volition, and be, what is the instinctive effort of all men, though in the midst of material Necessity, morally Free. Voltaire's latent derision is as light, copious and all-pervading as the derision which he utters. Nor is this so simple an attainment as we might fancy; a certain kind and degree of Stoicism, or approach to Stoicism, is necessary for the completed *Persifleur;* as for moral, or even practical completion, in any other way. The most indifferent-minded man is not by nature indifferent to his own pain and pleasure: this is an indifference which he must by some method study to acquire, or acquire the show of; and which, it is fair to say, Voltaire manifests in a rather respectable degree.

Without murmuring, he has reconciled himself to most things: the human lot, in this lower world, seems a strange business, yet, on the whole, with more of the farce in it than of the tragedy; to him it is nowise heartrending that this Planet of ours should be sent sailing through Space, like a miserable aimless Ship-of-Fools, and he himself be a fool among the rest, and only a very little wiser than they. He does not, like Bolingbroke, "patronize Providence," though such sayings as *Si Dieu n'existait pas, il faudrait l'inventer,* seem now and then to indicate a tendency of that sort: but, at all events, he never openly levies war against Heaven; well knowing that the time spent in frantic malediction, directed *thither*, might be spent otherwise with more profit. There is, truly, no *Werterism* in him, either in its bad or its good sense. If he sees no unspeakable majesty in heaven and earth, neither does he see any unsufferable horror there. His view of the world is a cool, gently scornful, altogether prosaic one: his sublimest Apocalypse of Nature lies in the microscope and telescope; the Earth is a place for producing corn; the Starry Heavens are admirable as a nautical timekeeper. Yet, like a prudent man, he has adjusted himself to his condition, such as it is: he does not chant any *Miserere* over human life, caiculating that no charitable dole, but only laughter, would be the reward of such an enterprise; does not hang or drown himself, clearly understanding that death of itself will soon save him that trouble. Affliction, it is true, has not for him any precious jewel in its head; on the contrary, it is an unmixed nuisance; yet, happily, not one to be howled over, so much as one to be speedily removed out of sight: if he does not learn from it Humility, and the sublime lesson of Resignation, neither does it teach him hard-heartedness and sickly discontent; but he bounds lightly over it, leaving both the jewel and the toad at a safe distance behind him.

Nor was Voltaire's history without perplexities enough to keep this principle in exercise; to try whether in life, as in literature, the *ridiculum* were really better than the *acre.* We must own, that on no occasion does it altogether fail him; never does he seem perfectly at a nonplus; no adventure is so hideous, that he cannot, in the long-run, find some means to laugh at it, and forget it. Take, for instance, that last ill-omened visit of his to Frederick the Great. This was, probably, the most mortifying incident in Voltaire's whole life: an open experiment, in the sight of all Europe, to ascertain whether French Philosophy had virtue enough in it to found any friendly union, in such circumstances, even between its great master and his most illustrious disciple; and an experiment which answered in the negative. As was natural enough; for Vanity is of a divisive, not of a uniting nature; and between the King of Letters and the King of Armies there existed no other tie. They should have kept up an interchange of flattery, from afar: gravitating towards one another like celestial luminaries, if they reckoned themselves such; yet always with a due centrifugal force; for if either shot madly from his sphere, nothing but collision, and concussion, and mutual recoil, could be the consequence. On the whole, we must pity Frederick, environed with that cluster of Philosophers: doubtless he meant rather well; yet the French at Rossbach, with guns in their hands, were but a small matter, compared with these French in Sans-Souci. Maupertuis sits sullen, monosyllabic; gloomy like the bear of his own arctic zone: Voltaire is the mad piper that will make him dance to tunes and amuse the people. In this royal circle, with its parasites and bashaws, what heats and jealousies must there not have been; what secret heart-burnings, smooth-faced malice, plottings, counter-plottings, and laurel-water pharmacy, in all its branches, before the ring of etiquette fairly burst asunder, and the establishment, so to speak, exploded!

Yet over all these distressing matters Voltaire has thrown a soft veil of gayety; he remembers neither Dr. Akakia, nor Dr. Akakia's patron, with any animosity; but merely as actors in the grand farce of life along with him, a new scene of which has now commenced, quite displacing the other from the stage. The arrest at Frankfort, indeed, is a sour morsel; but this too he swallows, with an effort. Frederick, as we are given to understand, had these whims by kind; was, indeed, a wonderful scion from such a stock; for what could equal the avarice, malice and rabid snappishness of old Frederick William the father?

"He had a minister at the Hague, named Luicius," says the wit: "this Luicius was, of all royal ministers extant, the worst paid. The poor man, with a view to warm himself, had a few trees cut down, in the garden of Honslardik, then belonging to the House of Prussia; immediately thereafter he received despatches from the King his master, keeping back a year of his salary. Luicius, in despair, cut his throat with the only razor he had (*avec le seul rasoir qu'il eût*): an old lackey came to his assistance, and unfortunately saved his life. At an after period, I myself saw his Excellency at the Hague, and gave him an alms at the gate of that Palace called *La Vieille Cour*, which belongs to the King of Prussia, where this unhappy Ambassador had lived twelve years."

With the *Roi-Philosophe* himself Voltaire in a little while recommences correspondence; and, to all appearance, proceeds quietly in his office of "buckwasher," that is, of verse-corrector to his Majesty, as if nothing whatever had happened.

Again, what human pen can describe the troubles this unfortunate philosopher had with his women? A gadding, feather-brained, capricious, old-coquettish, embittered and embittering set of wantons from the earliest to the last! Widow Denis, for example, that disobedient Niece, whom he rescued from furnished lodgings and spare diet, into pomp and plenty, how did she pester the last stage of his existence, for twenty-four years long! Blind to the peace and roses of Ferney, ever hankering and fretting after Parisian display; not without flirtation, though advanced in life; losing money at play, and purloining wherewith to make it good; scolding his servants, quarrelling with his secretaries, so that the too indulgent uncle must turn off his beloved Collini, nay almost be run through the body by him, for her sake! The good Wagnière, who succeeded this fiery Italian in the secretaryship, and loved Voltaire with a most creditable affection, cannot, though a simple, humble and philanthropic man, speak of Madame Denis without visible overflowings of gall. He openly accuses her of hastening her uncle's death by her importunate stratagems to keep him in Paris, where was her heaven. Indeed it is clear that, his goods and chattels once made sure of, her chief care was that so fiery a patient might die soon enough; or, at best, according to her own confession, "how she was to get him buried." We have known superannuated grooms, nay effete saddle-horses, regarded with more real sympathy in their home, than was the best of uncles by the worst of nieces. Had not this surprising old man retained the sharpest judgment, and the gayest, easiest temper, his last days and last years must have been a continued scene of violence and tribulation.

Little better, worse in several respects, though at a time when he could better endure it, was the far-famed Marquise du Châtelet. Many a tempestuous day and wakeful night had he with that scientific and too-fascinating shrew. She speculated in mathematics and metaphysics; but was an adept also in far, very far different acquirements. Setting aside its whole criminality, which, indeed, perhaps went for little there, this literary amour wears but a mixed aspect; short sungleams, with long tropical tornadoes; touches of guitar-music, soon followed by Lisbon earthquakes. Marmontel, we remember, speaks of *knives* being used, at least brandished, and for quite other purposes than carving. Madame la Marquise was no saint, in any sense; but rather a Socrates's spouse, who would keep patience, and the whole philosophy of gayety, in constant practice. Like Queen Elizabeth, if she had the talents of a man, she had more than the caprices of a woman.

We shall take only one item, and that a small one, in this mountain of misery: her strange habits and methods of locomotion. She is perpetually travelling: a peaceful philosopher is lugged over the world, to Cirey, to Lunéville, to that *pied à terre* in Paris; resistance avails not; here, as in so many other cases, *il faut se ranger.* Sometimes, precisely on the eve of such a departure, her domestics, exasperated by hunger and ill-usage, will strike work, in a body; and a new set has to be collected at an hour's warning. Then Madame has been known to keep the postilions cracking and *sacre*-ing at the gate from dawn till dewy eve, simply because she was playing cards, and the games went against her. But figure a lean and vivid-tempered philosopher starting from Paris at last; under cloud of night; during hard frost; in a huge lumbering coach, or rather wagon, compared with which, indeed, the generality of modern wagons were a luxurious conveyance. With four starved, and perhaps spavined hacks, he slowly sets forth, "under a mountain of bandboxes:" at his side sits the wandering virago; in front of him a serving-maid, with additional bandboxes "*et divers effets de sa maîtresse.*" At the next stage, the postilions have to be beat up; they come out swearing. Cloaks and fur-pelisses avail little against the January cold; "time and hours" are, once more, the only hope; but, lo, at the tenth mile, this Tyburn-coach breaks down! One many-voiced discordant wail shrieks through the solitude, making night hideous, — but in vain; the axletree has given way, the vehicle has overset, and marchionesses, chambermaids, bandboxes and philosophers, are weltering in inextricable chaos.

"The carriage was in the stage next Nangis, about half-way to that town, when the hind axletree broke, and it tumbled on the road, to M. de Voltaire's side: Madame du Châtelet, and her maid, fell above him, with all their bundles and bandboxes, for these were not tied to the front, but only piled up on both hands of the maid; and so, observing the laws of equilibrium and gravitation of bodies, they rushed towards the corner where M. de Voltaire lay squeezed together. Under so many burdens, which half-suffocated him, he kept shouting bitterly (*poussait des cris aigus*); but it was impossible to change place; all had to remain as it was, till the two lackeys, one of whom was hurt by the fall, could come up, with the postilions, to disencumber the vehicle; they first drew out all the luggage, next the women, then M. de Voltaire. Nothing could be got out except by the top, that is, by the coach-door, which now opened upwards: one of the lackeys and a postilion clambering aloft, and fixing themselves on the body of the vehicle, drew them up, as from a well; seizing the first limb that came to hand, whether arm or leg; and then passed them down to the two stationed below, who set them finally on the ground."[1]

What would Dr. Kitchiner, with his *Traveller's Oracle,* have said to all this? For there is snow on the ground: and four peasants must be roused from a village half a league off, before that accursed vehicle can so much as be lifted from its beam-ends! Vain it is for Longchamp, far in advance, sheltered in a hospitable though half-dismantled *château,* to pluck pigeons and be in haste to roast them: they will never, never be eaten to supper, scarcely to breakfast next morning!—Nor is it now only, but several times, that this unhappy axletree plays them foul; nay once, beggared by Madame's gambling, they have not cash to pay for mending it, and the smith, though they are in keenest flight, almost for their lives, will not trust them.

We imagine that these are trying things for any philosopher. Of the thousand other more private and perennial grievances; of certain discoveries and explanations, especially, which it still seems surprising that human philosophy could have tolerated, we make no mention; indeed, with regard to the latter, few earthly considerations could tempt a Reviewer of sensibility to mention them in this place.

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[1] Vol. ii. p. 166.

The Marquise du Châtelet, and her husband, have been much wondered at in England: the calm magnanimity with which M. le Marquis conforms to the custom of the country, to the wishes of his helpmate, and leaves her, he himself meanwhile fighting, or at least drilling, for his King, to range over Space, in quest of loves and lovers; his friendly discretion, in this particular; no less so, his blithe benignant gullibility, the instant a *contretems de famille* renders his countenance needful,—have had all justice done them among us. His lady too is a wonder; offers no mean study to psychologists: she is a fair experiment to try how far that Delicacy, which we reckon innate in females, is only incidental and the product of fashion; how far a woman, not merely immodest, but without the slightest fig-leaf of common decency remaining, with the whole character, in short, of a *male* debauchee, may still have any moral worth as a woman. We ourselves have wondered a little over both these parties; and over the goal to which so strange a "progress of society" might be tending. But still more wonderful, not without a shade of the sublime, has appeared to us the cheerful thraldom of this maltreated philosopher; and with what exhaustless patience, not being wedded, he endured all these forced-marches, whims, irascibilities, delinquencies and thousand-fold unreasons; braving "the battle and the breeze," on that wild Bay of Biscay, for such a period. Fifteen long years, and was not mad, or a suicide at the end of them! But the like fate, it would seem, though worthy D'Israeli has omitted to enumerate it in his *Calamities of Authors*, is not unknown in literature. Pope also had his Mrs. Martha Blount; and, in the midst of that warfare with united Duncedom, his daily tale of Egyptian bricks to bake. Let us pity the lot of genius, in this sublunary sphere!

Every one knows the earthly termination of Madame la Marquise; and how, by a strange, almost satirical *Nemesis*, she was taken in her own nets, and her worst sin became her final punishment. To no purpose was the unparalleled credulity of M. le Marquis; to no purpose, the amplest toleration, and even helpful knavery of M. de Voltaire; "*les assiduités de*

M. de Saint-Lambert," and the unimaginable consultations to which they gave rise at Cirey, were frightfully parodied in the end. The last scene was at Lunéville, in the peaceable court of King Stanislaus.

"Seeing that the aromatic vinegar did no good, we tried to recover her from the sudden lethargy by rubbing her feet, and striking in the palms of her hands; but it was of no use: she had ceased to be. The maid was sent off to Madame de Boufflers's apartment, to inform the company that Madame du Châtelet was worse. Instantly they all rose from the supper-table: M. du Châtelet, M. de Voltaire, and the other guests, rushed into the room. So soon as they understood the truth, there was a deep consternation; to tears, to cries succeeded a mournful silence. The husband was led away, the other individuals went out successively, expressing the keenest sorrow. M. de Voltaire and M. de Saint-Lambert remained the last by the bedside, from which they could not be drawn away. At length, the former, absorbed in deep grief, left the room, and with difficulty reached the main door of the Castle, not knowing whither he went. Arrived there, he fell down at the foot of the outer stairs, and near the box of a sentry, where his head came on the pavement. His lackey, who was following, seeing him fall and struggle on the ground, ran forward and tried to lift him. At this moment, M. de Saint Lambert, retiring by the same way, also arrived; and observing M. de Voltaire in that situation, hastened to assist the lackey. No sooner was M. de Voltaire on his feet, than opening his eyes, dimmed with tears, and recognizing M. de Saint-Lambert, he said to him, with sobs and the most pathetic accent: 'Ah, my friend, it is you that have killed her!' Then, all on a sudden, as if he were starting from a deep sleep, he exclaimed in a tone of reproach and despair: '*Eh! mon Dieu! Monsieur, de quoi vous avisiez-vous de lui faire un enfant?*' They parted thereupon, without adding a single word; and retired to their several apartments, overwhelmed and almost annihilated by the excess of their sorrow." [1]

Among all threnetical discourses on record, this last, between men overwhelmed and almost annihilated by the excess of their sorrow, has probably an unexampled character. Some days afterwards, the first paroxysm of "reproach [illegible] despair" being somewhat assuaged, the sorrowing widower, not the glad legal one, composed this quatrain: —

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[1] Vol. ii. p. 250.

> "*L'univers a perdu la sublime Emilie.*
> *Elle aima les plaisirs, les arts, la vérité;*
> *Les dieux, en lui donnant leur âme et leur génie,*
> *N'avaient gardé pour eux que l'immortalité.*"

After which, reflecting, perhaps, that with this sublime Emilia, so meritoriously singular in loving pleasure, "his happiness had been chiefly on paper," he, like the bereaved Universe, consoled himself, and went on his way.

Woman, it has been sufficiently demonstrated, was given to man as a benefit, and for mutual support; a precious ornament and staff whereupon to lean in many trying situations: but to Voltaire she proved, so unlucky was he in this matter, little else than a broken reed, which only ran into his hand. We confess that, looking over the manifold trials of this poor philosopher with the softer, or as he may have reckoned it, the harder sex, — from the Dutchwoman who published his juvenile letters, to the Niece Denis who as good as killed him with racketing, — we see, in this one province, very great scope for almost all the cardinal virtues. And to these internal convulsions add an incessant series of controversies and persecutions, political, religious, literary, from without; and we have a life quite rent asunder, horrent with asperities and chasms, where even a stout traveller might have faltered. Over all which Chamouni-Needles and Staubbach-Falls the great *Persifleur* skims along in this his little poetical air-ship, more softly than if he travelled the smoothest of merely prosaic roads.

Leaving out of view the worth or worthlessness of such a temper of mind, we are bound, in all seriousness, to say, both that it seems to have been Voltaire's highest conception of moral excellence, and that he has pursued and realized it with no small success. One great praise therefore he deserves, — that of unity with himself; that of *having* an aim, and steadfastly endeavoring after it, nay, as we have found, of attaining it; for his ideal Voltaire seems, to an unusual degree, manifested, made practically apparent in the real one. There can be no doubt but this attainment of *Persifleur*, in the wide sense we here give it, was of all others the most admired and sought after in Voltaire's age and country; nay, in our own age and country we have still innumerable admirers of it, and unwearied seekers after it, on every hand of us; nevertheless, we cannot but believe that its acme is past; that the best sense of our generation has already weighed its significance, and found it wanting. Voltaire himself, it seems to us, were he alive at this day, would find other tasks than that of mockery, especially of mockery in that style: it is not by Derision and Denial, but by far deeper, more earnest, diviner means that aught truly great has been effected for mankind; that the fabric of man's life has been reared, through long centuries, to its present height. If we admit that this chief of *Persifleurs* had a steady conscious aim in life, the still higher praise of having had a right or noble aim cannot be conceded him without many limitations, and may, plausibly enough, be altogether denied.

At the same time, let it not be forgotten, that amid all these blighting influences, Voltaire maintains a certain indestructible humanity of nature; a soul never deaf to the cry of wretchedness; never utterly blind to the light of truth, beauty, goodness. It is even, in some measure, poetically interesting to observe this fine contradiction in him: the heart acting without directions from the head, or perhaps against its directions; the man virtuous, as it were, in spite of himself. For, at all events, it will be granted that, as a private man, his existence was beneficial, not hurtful, to his fellow-men: the Calases, the Sirvens, and so many orphans and outcasts whom he cherished and protected, ought to cover a multitude of sins. It was his own sentiment, and to all appearance a sincere one —

> "*J'ai fait un peu de bien: c'est mon meilleur ouvrage.*"

Perhaps there are few men, with such principles and such temptations as his were, that could have led such a life; few that could have done his work, and come through it with cleaner hands. If we call him the greatest of all *Persifleurs*, let us add that, morally speaking also, he is the best: if he excels all men in universality, sincerity, polished clearness of Mockery, he perhaps combines with it as much worth of heart as, in any man, that habit can admit of.

It is now well-nigh time that we should quit this part of our subject: nevertheless, in seeking to form some picture of Voltaire's practical life, and the character, outward as well as inward, of his appearance in society, our readers will not grudge us a few glances at the last and most striking scene he enacted there. To our view, that final visit to Paris has a strange half-frivolous, half-fateful aspect; there is, as it were, a sort of dramatic justice in this catastrophe, that he, who had all his life hungered and thirsted after public favor, should at length die by excess of it; should find the door of his Heaven-on-earth unexpectedly thrown wide open, and enter there, only to be, as he himself said, "smothered under roses." Had Paris any suitable theogony or theology, as Rome and Athens had, this might almost be reckoned, as those Ancients accounted of death by lightning, a sacred death, a death from the gods, from their many-headed god, POPULARITY. In the benignant quietude of Ferney, Voltaire had lived long, and as his friends calculated, might still have lived long; but a series of trifling causes lures him to Paris, and in three months he is no more. At all hours of his history, he might have said with Alexander: "O Athenians, what toil do I undergo to please you!" and the last pleasure his Athenians demand of him is, that he would die for them.

Considered with reference to the world at large, this journey is farther remarkable. It is the most splendid triumph of that nature recorded in these ages; the loudest and showiest homage ever paid to what we moderns call Literature; to a man that had merely thought, and published his thoughts. Much false tumult, no doubt, there was in it; yet also a certain deeper significance. It is interesting to see how universal and eternal in man is love of wisdom; how the highest and the lowest, how supercilious princes, and rude peasants, and all men must alike show honor to Wisdom, or the appearance of Wisdom; nay, properly speaking, can show honor to nothing else. For it is not in the power of all Xerxes' hosts to bend one thought of our proud heart: these "may destroy the case of Anaxarchus; himself they cannot reach:" only to spiritual worth can the spirit do reverence; only in a soul deeper and better than ours can we see any heavenly mystery, and in humbling ourselves feel ourselves exalted. That the so ebullient enthusiasm of the French was in this case perfectly well directed, we cannot undertake to say: yet we rejoice to see and know that such a principle exists perennially in man's inmost bosom; that there is no heart so sunk and stupefied, none so withered and pampered, but the felt presence of a nobler heart will inspire it and lead it captive.

Few royal progresses, few Roman triumphs, have equalled this long triumph of Voltaire. On his journey, at Bourg-en-Bresse, "he was recognized," says Wagnière, "while the horses were changing, and in a few moments the whole town crowded about the carriage; so that he was forced to lock himself for some time in a room of the inn." The Maître-de-poste ordered his postilion to yoke better horses, and said to him with a broad oath: "*Va bon train, crève mes chevaux, je m'en f—; tu mènes M. de Voltaire!*" At Dijon, there were persons of distinction that wished even to dress themselves as waiters, that they might serve him at supper, and see him by this stratagem.

"At the barrier of Paris," continues Wagnière, "the officers asked if we had nothing with us contrary to the King's regulations: 'On my word, gentlemen, *Ma foi, Messieurs,*' replied M. de Voltaire, 'I believe there is nothing contraband here except myself.' I alighted from the carriage, that the inspector might more readily examine it. One of the guards said to his comrade: *C'est pardieu! M. de Voltaire.* He plucked at the coat of the person who was searching, and repeated the same words, looking fixedly at me. I could not help laughing; then all gazing with the greatest astonishment mingled with respect, begged M. de Voltaire to pass on whither he pleased."[1]

Intelligence soon circulated over Paris; scarcely could the arrival of Kien-Long, or the Grand Lama of Thibet, have excited greater ferment. Poor Longchamp, demitted, or rather dismissed from Voltaire's service eight-and-twenty years before, and now, as a retired map-dealer (having resigned in favor of his son), living quietly "*dans un petit logement à part*," a fine smooth, garrulous old man, — heard the news next morning in his remote *logement*, in the Estrapade; and instantly huddled on his clothes, though he had not been out for two days, to go and see what truth was in it.

"Several persons of my acquaintance, whom I met, told me that they had heard the same. I went purposely to the *Café Procope*, where this news formed the subject of conversation among several politicians, or men of letters, who talked of it with warmth. To assure myself still farther, I walked thence towards the *Quai des Théatins*, where he had alighted the night before, and, as was said, taken up his lodging in a mansion near the church. Coming out from the Rue de la Seine, I saw afar off a great number of people gathered on the Quai, not far from the Pont-Royal. Approaching nearer, I observed that this crowd was collected in front of the Marquis de Villette's Hôtel, at the corner of the Rue de Beaune. I inquired what the matter was. The people answered me, that M. de Voltaire was in that house; and they were waiting to see him when he came out. They were not sure, however, whether he would come out that day; for it was natural to think that an old man of eighty-four might need a day or two of rest. From that moment, I no longer doubted the arrival of M. de Voltaire in Paris."[2]

By dint of address, Longchamp, in process of time, contrived to see his old master; had an interview of ten minutes; was for falling at his feet; and wept with sad presentiments at parting. Ten such minutes were a great matter; for Voltaire had his levees and couchees, more crowded than those of any Emperor; princes and peers thronged his antechamber; and when he went abroad, his carriage was as the nucleus of a comet, whose train extended over whole districts of the city. He himself, says Wagnière, expressed dissatisfaction at much of this. Nevertheless, there were some plaudits which, as he confessed, went to his heart. Condorcet mentions that once a person in the crowd, inquiring who this great man was, a poor woman answered, "*C'est le sauveur des Calas.*" Of a quite different sort was the tribute paid him by a quack, in the Place Louis Quinze, haranguing a mixed multitude on the art of juggling with cards: "*Here*, gentlemen," said he, "is a trick I learned at Ferney, from that great man who makes so much noise among you, that famous M. de Voltaire, the master of us all!" In fact, mere gaping curiosity, and even ridicule, was abroad, as well as real enthusiasm. The clergy too were recoiling into ominous groups; already some Jesuitic drums ecclesiastic had beat to arms.

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[1] Vol. i. p. 121.

[2] Vol. ii. p. 353.

Figuring the lean, tottering, lonely old man in the midst of all this, how he looks into it, clear and alert, though no longer strong and calm, we feel drawn towards him by some tie of affection, of kindly sympathy. Longchamp says, he appeared "extremely worn, though still in the possession of all his senses, and with a very firm voice." The following little sketch, by a hostile journalist of the day, has fixed itself deeply with us: —

"M. de Voltaire appeared in full dress, on Tuesday, for the first time since his arrival in Paris. He had on a red coat lined with ermine; a large peruke, in the fashion of Louis XIV., black, unpowdered; and in which his withered visage was so buried that you saw only his two eyes shining like carbuncles. His head was surmounted by a square red cap in the form of a crown, which seemed only laid on. He had in his hand a small nibbed cane; and the public of Paris, not accustomed to see him in this accoutrement, laughed a good deal. This personage, singular in all, wishes doubtless to have nothing in common with ordinary men." [1]

This head — this wondrous microcosm in the *grande perruque à la Louis XIV.* — was so soon to be distenanted of all its cunning gifts; these eyes, shining like carbuncles, were so soon to be closed in long night! — We must now give the coronation ceremony, of which the reader may have heard so much: borrowing from this same sceptical hand, which, however, is vouched for by Wagnière; as, indeed, La Harpe's more heroical narrative of that occurrence is well known, and hardly differs from the following, except in style: —

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[1] Vol. ii. p. 466.

"On Monday, M. de Voltaire, resolving to enjoy the triumph which had been so long promised him, mounted his carriage, that azure-colored vehicle, bespangled with gold stars, which a wag called the chariot of the empyrean; and so repaired to the Académie Française, which that day had a special meeting. Twenty-two members were present. None of the prelates, abbés or other ecclesiastics who belong to it, would attend, or take part in these singular deliberations. The sole exceptions were the Abbés de Boismont and Millot; the one a court rake-hell (*roué*), with nothing but the guise of his profession; the other a varlet (*cuistre*), having no favor to look for, either from the Court or the Church.

"The Académie went out to meet M. de Voltaire: he was led to the Director's seat, which that office-bearer and the meeting invited him to accept. His portrait had been hung up above it. The company, without drawing lots, as is the custom, proceeded to work, and named him, by acclamation, Director for the April quarter. The old man, once set a-going, was about to talk a great deal; but they told him, that they valued his health too much to hear him, — that they would reduce him to silence. M. d'Alembert accordingly occupied the session, by reading his *Eloge de Despréaux*, which had already been communicated on a public occasion, and where he had inserted various flattering things for the present visitor.

"M. de Voltaire then signified a wish to visit the Secretary of the Académie, whose apartments are above. With this gentleman he stayed some time; and at last set out for the Comédie Française. The court of the Louvre, vast as it is, was full of people waiting for him. So soon as his notable vehicle came in sight, the cry arose, *Le voilà!* The Savoyards, the apple-women, all the rabble of the quarter had assembled there;

and the acclamations, *Vive Voltaire!* resounded as if they would never end. The Marquis de Villette, who had arrived before, came to hand him out of his carriage, where the Procureur Clos was seated beside him: both these gave him their arms, and could scarcely extricate him from the press. On his entering the playhouse, a crowd of more elegance, and seized with true enthusiasm for genius, surrounded him: the ladies, above all, threw themselves in his way, and stopped it, the better to look at him; some were seen squeezing forward to touch his clothes; some plucking hair from his fur. M. le Duc de Chartres,[1] not caring to advance too near, showed, though at a distance, no less curiosity than others.

"The saint, or rather the god, of the evening, was to occupy the box belonging to the Gentlemen of the Bedchamber,[2] opposite that of the Comte d'Artois. Madame Denis and Madame de Villette were already there; and the pit was in convulsions of joy, awaiting the moment when the poet should appear. There was no end till he placed himself on the front seat, beside the ladies. Then rose a cry: *La Couronne!* and Brizard, the actor, came and put the garland on his head. "Ah, Heaven! will you kill me, then? (*Ah, Dieu! vous voulez donc me faire mourir?*)" cried M. de Voltaire, weeping with joy, and resisting this honor. He took the crown in his hand, and presented it to *Belle-et-Bonne:*[3] she withstood; and the Prince de Beauvau, seizing the laurel, replaced it on the head of our Sophocles, who could refuse no longer.

"The piece (*Irène*) was played, and with more applause than usual, though scarcely with enough to correspond to this triumph of its author. Meanwhile the players were in straits as to what they should do; and during their deliberations the tragedy ended; the curtain fell, and the tumult of the people was extreme, till it rose again, disclosing a show like that of the *Centénaire.* M. de Voltaire's bust, which had been placed shortly before in the *foyer* (green-room) of the Comédie Française, had been brought upon the stage, and elevated on a pedestal; the whole body of comedians stood round it in a semicircle, with palms and garlands in their hands; there was a crown already on the bust. The pealing of musical flourishes, of drums, of trumpets, had announced the ceremony; and Madame Vestris held in her hand a paper, which was soon understood to contain verses, lately composed by the Marquis de Saint-Marc. She recited them with an emphasis proportioned to the extravagance of the scene. They ran as follows: —

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[1] Afterwards Egalité.

[2] He himself, as is perhaps too well known, was one.

[3] The Marquise de Villette, a foster-child of his.

'*Aux yeux de Paris enchanté,*
Reçois en ce jour un hommage,
Que confirmera d'âge en âge
La sévère postérité!

'*Non, tu n'as pas besoin d'atteindre au noir rivage*
Pour jouir des honneurs de l'immortalité!

'VOLTAIRE, *reçois la couronne*
Que l'on vient de te présenter;
Il est beau de la mériter,
Quand c'est la France qui la donne!'[1]

This was encored: the actress recited it again. Next, each of them went forward and laid his garland round the bust. Mademoiselle Fanier, in a fanatical ecstasy, kissed it, and all the others imitated her.

"This long ceremony, accompanied with infinite *vivats*, being over, the curtain again dropped; and when it rose for *Nanine*, one of M. de Voltaire's comedies, his bust was seen on the right-hand side of the stage, where it remained during the whole play.

"M. le Comte d'Artois did not choose to show himself too openly; but being informed, according to his orders, as soon as M. de Voltaire appeared in the theatre, he had gone thither incognito; and it is thought that the old man, once when he went out for a moment, had the honor of a short interview with his Royal Highness.

"*Nanine* finished, comes a new hurly-burly; a new trial for the modesty of our philosopher! He had got into his carriage, but the people would not let him go; they threw themselves on the horses, they kissed them: some young poets even cried out to unyoke these animals, and draw the modern Apollo home with their own arms; unhappily, there were not enthusiasts enough to volunteer this service, and he at last got leave to depart, not without *vivats,* which he may have heard on the Pont-Royal, and even in his own house. . . .

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[1] As Dryden said of Swift, so may we say: Our cousin Saint-Marc has no turn for poetry.

"M. de Voltaire, on reaching home, wept anew; and modestly protested that if he had known the people were to play so many follies, he would not have gone."

On all these wonderful proceedings we shall leave our readers to their own reflections; remarking only, that this happened on the 30th of March (1778), and that on the 30th of May, about the same hour, the object of such extraordinary adulation was in the article of death; the hearse already prepared to receive his remains, for which even a grave had to be stolen. "He expired," says Wagnière, "about a quarter past eleven at night, with the most perfect tranquillity, after having suffered the cruelest pains, in consequence of those fatal drugs, which his own imprudence, and especially that of the persons who should have looked to it, made him swallow. Ten minutes before his last breath, he took the hand of Morand, his valet-de-chambre, who was watching by him; pressed it, and said, '*Adieu, mon cher Morand, je me meurs,* Adieu, my dear Morand, I am gone.' These are the last words uttered by M. de Voltaire." [1]

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[1] On this sickness of Voltaire, and his death-bed deportment, many foolish books have been written; concerning which it is not necessary to say anything. The conduct of the Parisian clergy, on that occasion, seems totally unworthy of their cloth; nor was their reward, so far as concerns these individuals, inappropriate: that of finding themselves once more bilked, once more *persiflés* by that strange old man, in his last decrepitude, who, in his strength, had wrought them and others so many griefs. Surely the parting agonies of a fellow-mortal, when the spirit of our brother, rapt in the whirlwinds and thick ghastly vapors of death, clutches blindly for help, and no help is there, are not the scenes where a wise faith would seek to exult, when it can no longer hope to alleviate! For the rest, to touch farther on those their idle tales of dying horrors, remorse and the like; to write of such, to believe them, or disbelieve them, or in anywise discuss them, were but a continuation of the same ineptitude. He who, after the imperturbable exit of so many Cartouches

We have still to consider this man in his specially intellectual capacity; which, as with every man of letters, is to be regarded as the clearest, and, to all practical intents, the most important aspect of him. Voltaire's intellectual endowment and acquirement, his talent or genius as a literary man, lies opened to us in a series of Writings, unexampled, as we believe, in two respects, — their extent, and their diversity. Perhaps there is no writer, not a mere compiler, but writing from his own invention or elaboration, who has left so many volumes behind him; and if to the merely arithmetical, we add a critical estimate, the singularity is still greater; for these volumes are not written without an appearance of due care and preparation; perhaps there is not one altogether feeble and confused treatise, nay one feeble and confused sentence, to be found in them. As to variety, again, they range nearly over all human subjects; from Theology down to Domestic Economy; from the Familiar Letter to the Political History; from the Pasquinade to the Epic Poem. Some strange gift, or union of gifts, must have been at work here; for the result is, at least, in the highest degree uncommon, and to be wondered at, if not to be admired.

If, through all this many-colored versatility, we try to deci-

and Thurtells, in every age of the world, can continue to regard the manner of a man's death as a test of his religious orthodoxy, may boast himself impregnable to merely terrestrial logic. Voltaire had enough of suffering, and of mean enough suffering to encounter, without any addition from theological despair. His last interview with the clergy, who had been sent for by his friends, that the rites of burial might not be denied him, is thus described by Wagnière, as it has been by all other credible reporters of it: —

"Two days before that mournful death, M. l'Abbé Mignot, his nephew, went to seek the Curé of Saint-Sulpice and the Abbé Guatier, and brought them into his uncle's sick-room; who, being informed that the Abbé Guatier was there, 'Ah, well!' said he, 'give him my compliments and my thanks.' The Abbé spoke some words to him, exhorting him to patience. The Curé of Saint-Sulpice then came forward, having announced himself, and asked of M. de Voltaire, elevating his voice, if he acknowleged the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ? The sick man pushed one of his hands against the Curé's *calotte* (coif), shoving him back, and cried, turning abruptly to the other side, 'Let me die in peace (*Laissez-moi mourir en paix*)!' The Curé seemingly considered his person soiled, and his coif dishonored, by the touch of a philosopher. He made the sick-nurse give him a little brushing, and then went out with the Abbé Guatier." Vol. i. p. 161.

pher the essential, distinctive features of Voltaire's intellect, it seems to us that we find there a counterpart to our theory of his moral character; as, indeed, if that theory was accurate, we must do: for the thinking and the moral nature, distinguished by the necessities of speech, have no such distinction in themselves; but, rightly examined, exhibit in every case the strictest sympathy and correspondence, are, indeed, but different phases of the same indissoluble unity, — a living mind. In life, Voltaire was found to be without good claim to the title of philosopher; and now, in literature, and for similar reasons, we find in him the same deficiencies. Here too it is not greatness, but the very extreme of expertness, that we recognize; not strength, so much as agility; not depth, but superficial extent. That truly surprising ability seems rather the unparalleled combination of many common talents, than the exercise of any finer or higher one: for here too the want of earnestness, of intense continuance, is fatal to him. He has the eye of a lynx; sees deeper, at the first glance, than any other man; but no second glance is given. Thus Truth, which to the philosopher, has from of old been said to live in a well, remains for the most part hidden from him; we may say forever hidden, if we take the highest, and only philosophical species of Truth; for this does not reveal itself to any mortal, without quite another sort of meditation than Voltaire ever seems to have bestowed on it. In fact, his deductions are uniformly of a forensic, argumentative, immediately practical nature; often true, we will admit, so far as they go; but not the whole truth; and false, when taken for the whole. In regard to feeling, it is the same with him: he is, in general, humane, mildly affectionate, not without touches of nobleness; but light, fitful, discontinuous; "a smart freethinker, all things in an hour." He is no Poet and Philosopher, but a popular sweet Singer and Haranguer: in all senses, and in all styles, a *Concionator*, which, for the most part, will turn out to be an altogether different character. It is true, in this last province he stands unrivalled; for such an audience, the most fit and perfectly persuasive of all preachers: but in many far higher provinces, he is neither perfect nor unrivalled;

has been often surpassed; was surpassed even in his own age and nation. For a decisive, thorough-going, in any measure gigantic force of thought, he is far inferior to Diderot: with all the liveliness he has not the soft elegance, with more than the wit he has but a small portion of the wisdom, that belonged to Fontenelle: as in real sensibility, so in the delineation of it, in pathos, loftiness and earnest eloquence, he cannot, making all fair abatements, and there are many, be compared with Rousseau.

Doubtless, an astonishing fertility, quickness, address; an openness also, and universal susceptibility of mind, must have belonged to him. As little can we deny that he manifests an assiduous perseverance, a capability of long-continued exertion, strange in so volatile a man; and consummate skill in husbanding and wisely directing his exertion. The very knowledge he had amassed, granting, which is but partly true, that it was superficial remembered knowledge, might have distinguished him as a mere Dutch commentator. From Newton's *Principia* to the *Shaster* and *Vedam*, nothing has escaped him: he has glanced into all literatures and all sciences; nay studied in them, for he can speak a rational word on all. It is known, for instance, that he understood Newton when no other man in France understood him: indeed, his countrymen may call Voltaire their discoverer of intellectual England; — a discovery, it is true, rather of the Curtis than of the Columbus sort, yet one which in his day still remained to be made. Nay from all sides he brings new light into his country: now, for the first time, to the upturned wondering eyes of Frenchmen in general, does it become clear that Thought has actually a kind of existence in other kingdoms; that some glimmerings of civilization had dawned here and there on the human species, prior to the *Siècle de Louis Quatorze.* Of Voltaire's acquaintance with History, at least with what he called History, be it civil, religious, or literary; of his innumerable, indescribable collection of facts, gathered from all sources, — from European Chronicles and State Papers, from eastern *Zends* and Jewish *Talmuds*, we need not remind any reader. It has been objected that his information was often borrowed at second-hand; that he had his plodders and pioneers, whom, as living dictionaries, he skilfully consulted in time of need. This also seems to be partly true, but deducts little from our estimate of him: for the skill *so* to borrow is even rarer than the power to lend. Voltaire's knowledge is not a mere show-room of curiosities, but truly a museum for purposes of teaching; every object is in its place, and there for its uses: nowhere do we find confusion or vain display; everywhere intention, instructiveness and the clearest order.

Perhaps it is this very power of Order, of rapid, perspicuous Arrangement, that lies at the root of Voltaire's best gifts; or rather, we should say, it is that keen, accurate intellectual vision, from which, to a mind of any intensity, Order naturally arises. The clear quick vision, and the methodic arrangement which springs from it, are looked upon as peculiarly French qualities; and Voltaire, at all times, manifests them in a more than French degree. Let him but cast his eye over any subject, in a moment he sees, though indeed only to a short depth, yet with instinctive decision, where the main bearings of it for that short depth lie; what is, or appears to be, its logical coherence; how causes connect themselves with effects; how the whole is to be seized, and in lucid sequence represented to his own or to other minds. In this respect, moreover, it is happy for him that, below the short depth alluded to, his view does not properly grow dim, but altogether terminates: thus there is nothing farther to occasion him misgivings; has he not already sounded into that basis of bottomless Darkness on which all things firmly rest? What lies below is delusion, imagination, some form of Superstition or Folly; which he, nothing doubting, altogether casts away. Accordingly, he is the most intelligible of writers; everywhere transparent at a glance. There is no delineation or disquisition of his, that has not its whole purport written on its forehead; all is precise, all is rightly adjusted; that keen spirit of Order shows itself in the whole, and in every line of the whole.

If we say that this power of Arrangement, as applied both to the acquisition and to the communication of ideas, is Voltaire's most serviceable faculty in all his enterprises, we say nothing singular: for take the word in its largest acceptation, and it comprehends the whole office of Understanding, logically so called; is the means whereby man accomplishes whatever, in the way of outward force, has been made possible for him; conquers all practical obstacles, and rises to be the "king of this lower world." It is the organ of all that Knowledge which can properly be reckoned synonymous with Power; for hereby man strikes with wise aim, into the infinite agencies of Nature, and multiplies his own small strength to unlimited degrees. It has been said also that man may rise to be the "god of this lower world;" but that is a far loftier height, not attainable by such power-knowledge, but by quite another sort, for which Voltaire in particular shows hardly any aptitude.

In truth, readily as we have recognized his spirit of Method, with its many uses, we are far from ascribing to him any perceptible portion of that greatest praise in thinking, or in writing, the praise of philosophic, still less of poetic Method; which, especially the latter, must be the fruit of deep feeling as well as of clear vision, — of genius as well as talent; and is much more likely to be found in the compositions of a Hooker or a Shakspeare than of a Voltaire. The Method discernible in Voltaire, and this on all subjects whatever, is a purely business Method. The order that arises from it is not Beauty, but, at best, Regularity. His objects do not lie round him in pictorial, not always in scientific grouping; but rather in commodious rows, where each may be seen and come at, like goods in a well-kept warehouse. We might say, there is not the deep natural symmetry of a forest oak, but the simple artificial symmetry of a parlor chandelier. Compare, for example, the plan of the *Henriade* to that of our so barbarous *Hamlet*. The plan of the former is a geometrical diagram by Fermat; that of the latter a cartoon by Raphael. The *Henriade*, as we see it completed, is a polished, square-built Tuileries: *Hamlet* is a mysterious star-paved Valhalla and dwelling of the gods.

Nevertheless, Voltaire's style of Method is, as we have said, a business one; and for his purposes more available than any other. It carries him swiftly through his work, and carries his reader swiftly through it; there is a prompt intelligence between the two; the whole meaning is communicated clearly, and comprehended without effort. From this also it may follow, that Voltaire will please the young more than he does the old; that the first perusal of him will please better than the second, if indeed any second be thought necessary. But what merit (and it is considerable) the pleasure and profit of this first perusal presupposes, must be honestly allowed him. Herein, it seems to us, lies the grand quality in all his performances. These Histories of his, for instance, are felt, in spite of their sparkling rapidity, and knowing air of philosophic insight, to be among the shallowest of all histories; mere bead-rolls of exterior occurrences, of battles, edifices, enactments, and other quite superficial phenomena; yet being clear bead-rolls, well adapted for memory, and recited in a lively tone, we listen with satisfaction, and learn somewhat; learn much, if we began knowing nothing. Nay sometimes the summary, in its skilful though crowded arrangement, and brilliant well-defined outlines, has almost a poetical as well as a didactic merit. *Charles the Twelfth* may still pass for a model in that often-attempted species of Biography: the clearest details are given in the fewest words; we have sketches of strange men and strange countries, of wars, adventures, negotiations, in a style which, for graphic brevity, rivals that of Sallust. It is a line-engraving, on a reduced scale, of that Swede and his mad life; without colors, yet not without the foreshortenings and perspective observances, nay not altogether without the deeper harmonies, which belong to a true Picture. In respect of composition, whatever may be said of its accuracy or worth otherwise, we cannot but reckon it greatly the best of Voltaire's Histories.

In his other prose works, in his Novels, and innumerable Essays and fugitive pieces, the same clearness of order, the same rapid precision of view, again forms a distinguishing merit. His *Zadigs* and *Baboucs* and *Candides*, which, considered as products of imagination perhaps rank higher with foreigners than any of his professedly poetical performances, are instinct with this sort of intellectual life: the sharpest glances, though from an oblique point of sight, into at least the surface of human life, into the old familiar world of business; which truly, from his oblique station, looks oblique enough, and yields store of ridiculous combinations. The Wit, manifested chiefly in these and the like performances, but ever flowing, unless purposely restrained, in boundless abundance from Voltaire's mind, has been often and duly celebrated. It lay deep-rooted in his nature; the inevitable produce of such an understanding with such a character, and was from the first likely, as it actually proved in the latter period of his life, to become the main dialect in which he spoke and even thought. Doing all justice to the inexhaustible readiness, the quick force, the polished acuteness of Voltaire's Wit, we may remark, at the same time, that it was nowise the highest species of employment for such a mind as his; that, indeed, it ranks essentially among the lowest species even of Ridicule. It is at all times mere logical pleasantry; a gayety of the head, not of the heart; there is scarcely a twinkling of Humor in the whole of his numberless sallies. Wit of this sort cannot maintain a demure sedateness; a grave yet infinitely kind aspect, warming the inmost soul with true loving mirth; it has not even the force to laugh outright, but can only sniff and titter. It grounds itself, not on fond sportful sympathy, but on contempt, or at best on indifference. It stands related to Humor as Prose does to Poetry; of which, in this department at least, Voltaire exhibits no symptom. The most determinedly ludicrous composition of his, the *Pucelle*, which cannot, on other grounds, be recommended to any reader, has no higher merit than that of an audacious caricature. True, he is not a buffoon; seldom or never violates the rules, we shall not say of propriety, yet of good breeding: to this negative praise he is entitled. But as for any high claim to positive praise, it cannot be made good. We look in vain, through his whole writings, for one lineament of a *Quixote* or a *Shandy;* even of a *Hudibras* or *Battle of the Books.* Indeed it has been more than once observed, that Humor is not a national gift with the French in late times;

that since Montaigne's day it seems to have well-nigh vanished from among them.

Considered in his technical capacity of Poet, Voltaire need not, at present, detain us very long. Here too his excellence is chiefly intellectual, and shown in the way of business-like method. Everything is well calculated for a given end; there is the utmost logical fitness of sentiment, of incident, of general contrivance. Nor is he without an enthusiasm that sometimes resembles inspiration; a clear fellow-feeling for the personages of his scene he always has; with a chameleon susceptibility he takes some hue of every object; if he cannot *be* that object, he at least plausibly enacts it. Thus we have a result everywhere consistent with itself; a contrivance, not without nice adjustments and brilliant aspects, which pleases with that old pleasure of "difficulties overcome," and the visible correspondence of means to end. That the deeper portion of our soul sits silent, unmoved under all this; recognizing no universal, everlasting Beauty, but only a modish Elegance, less the work of a poetical creation than a process of the toilette, need occasion no surprise. It signifies only that Voltaire was a French poet, and wrote as the French people of that day required and approved. We have long known that French poetry aimed at a different result from ours; that its splendor was what we should call a dead, artificial one; not the manifold soft summer glories of Nature, but a cold splendor, as of polished metal.

On the whole, in reading Voltaire's poetry, that adventure of the *Café de Procope* should ever be held in mind. He was not without an eye to have looked, had he seen others looking, into the deepest nature of poetry; nor has he failed here and there to cast a glance in that direction: but what preferment could such enterprises earn for him in the *Café de Procope?* What could it profit his all-precious "fame" to pursue them farther? In the end, he seems to have heartily reconciled himself to use and wont, and striven only to do better what he saw all others doing. Yet his private poetical creed, which could not be a catholic one, was, nevertheless, scarcely so bigoted as might have been looked for. That censure of Shakspeare, which elicited a re-censure in England, perhaps rather deserved a "recommendatory epistle," all things being considered. He calls Shakspeare "a genius full of force and fertility, of nature and sublimity," though unhappily "without the smallest spark of good taste, or the smallest acquaintance with the rules;" which, in Voltaire's dialect, is not so false; Shakspeare having really almost no Parisian *bon goût* whatever, and walking through "*the* rules" so often as he sees good, with the most astonishing tranquillity. After a fair enough account of *Hamlet*, the best of those "*farces monstrueuses qu'on appelle tragédies*," where, however, there are "scenes so beautiful, passages so grand and so terrible," Voltaire thus proceeds to resolve two great problems: —

"The first, how so many wonders could accumulate in a single head; for it must be confessed that all the divine Shakspeare's plays are written in this taste: the second, how men's minds could have been elevated so as to look at these plays with transport; and how they are still followed after, in a century which has produced Addison's *Cato?*

"Our astonishment at the first wonder will cease, when we understand that Shakspeare took all his tragedies from histories or romances; and that in this case he only turned into verse the romance of *Claudius, Gertrude and Hamlet*, written in full by Saxo Grammaticus, to whom be the praise.

"The second part of the problem, that is to say, the pleasure men take in these tragedies, presents a little more difficulty; but here is (*en voici*) the solution, according to the deep reflections of certain philosophers.

"The English chairmen, the sailors, hackney-coachmen, shop-porters, butchers, clerks even, are passionately fond of shows; give them cock-fights, bull-baitings, fencing-matches, burials, duels, gibbets, witchcraft, apparitions, they run thither in crowds; nay there is more than one patrician as curious as the populace. The citizens of London found, in Shakspeare's tragedies, satisfaction enough for such a turn of mind. The courtiers were obliged to follow the torrent: how can you help admiring what the more sensible part of the town admires? There was nothing better for a hundred and fifty years: the admiration grew with age, and became an idolatry. Some touches of genius, some happy verses full of force and nature, which you remember in spite of yourself, atoned for the remainder, and soon the whole piece succeeded by the help of some beauties of detail." [1]

Here, truly, is a comfortable little theory, which throws light on more than one thing. However, it is couched in mild terms, comparatively speaking. Frederick the Great, for example, thus gives his verdict: —

"To convince yourself of the wretched taste that up to this day prevails in Germany, you have only to visit the public theatres. You will there see, in action, the abominable plays of Shakspeare, translated into our language; and the whole audience fainting with rapture (*se pâmer d'aise*) in listening to those ridiculous farces, worthy of the savages of Canada. I call them such, because they sin against all the rules of the theatre. One may pardon those mad sallies in Shakspeare, for the birth of the arts is never the point of their maturity. But here, even now, we have a *Goetz de Berlichingen*, which has just made its appearance on the scene; a detestable imitation of those miserable English pieces; and the pit applauds, and demands with enthusiasm the repetition of these disgusting ineptitudes (*de ces dégoûtantes platitudes*)." [2]

We have not cited these criticisms with a view to impugn them; but simply to ascertain where the critics themselves are standing. This passage of Frederick's has even a touch of pathos in it; may be regarded as the expiring cry of "*Goût*" in that country, who sees himself suddenly beleaguered by strange, appalling Supernatural Influences, which he mistakes for Lapland witchcraft or Cagliostro jugglery; which nevertheless swell up round him, irrepressible, higher, ever higher; and so he drowns, grasping his opera-hat, in an ocean of "*dégoûtantes platitudes*." On the whole, it would appear that Voltaire's view of poetry was radically different from ours; that, in fact, of what we should strictly call poetry, he had almost no view whatever. A Tragedy, a Poem, with him is not to be "a manifestation of man's Reason in forms suitable to his Sense;" but rather a highly complex egg-dance, to be danced before the King, to a given tune and without breaking a single egg. Nevertheless, let justice be shown to him, and to French poetry at large. This latter is a peculiar growth of our modern ages; has been laboriously cultivated, and is not without its own value. We have to remark also, as a curious fact, that it has been, at one time or other, transplanted into all countries, England, Germany, Spain; but though under the sunbeams of royal protection, it would strike root nowhere. Nay, now it seems falling into the sere and yellow leaf in its own natal soil: the axe has already been seen near its root; and perhaps, in no great lapse of years, this species of poetry may be to the French, what it is to all other nations, a pleasing reminiscence. Yet the elder French loved it with zeal; to them it must have had a true worth: indeed we can understand how, when Life itself consisted so much in Display, these representations of Life may have been the only suitable ones. And now, when the nation feels itself called to a more grave and nobler destiny among nations, the want of a new literature also begins to be felt. As yet, in looking at their too purblind, scrambling controversies of *Romanticists* and *Classicists*, we cannot find that our ingenious neighbors have done much more than make a commencement in this enterprise; however, a commencement seems to be made: they are in what may be called the eclectic state; trying all things, German, English, Italian, Spanish, with a candor and real love of improvement, which give the best omens of a still higher success. From the peculiar gifts of the French, and their peculiar spiritual position, we may expect, had they once more attained to an original style, many important benefits, and important accessions to the Literature of the World. Meanwhile, in considering and duly estimating what that people has in past times accomplished, Voltaire must always be reckoned among their most meritorious Poets. Inferior in what we may call general poetic temperament to Racine; greatly inferior, in some points of it, to Corneille, he has an intellectual vivacity, a quickness both of sight and of invention, which belongs to neither of these two. We believe that, among foreign nations, his Tragedies, such works as *Zaire* and *Mahomet*, are considerably the most esteemed of this school.

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[1] *Œuvres*, t. xlvii. p. 300.

[2] *De la Littérature Allemande;* Berlin, 1780. We quote from the compilation, *Goethe in den Zeugnissen der Mitlebenden*, s. 124.

However, it is nowise as a Poet, Historian or Novelist, that Voltaire stands so prominent in Europe; but chiefly as a religious Polemic, as a vehement opponent of the Christian Faith. Viewed in this last character, he may give rise to many grave reflections, only a small portion of which can here be so much as glanced at. We may say, in general, that his style of controversy is of a piece with himself; not a higher, and scarcely a lower style than might have been expected from him. As, in a moral point of view, Voltaire nowise wanted a love of truth, yet had withal a still deeper love of his own interest in truth; was, therefore, intrinsically no Philosopher, but a highly accomplished Trivialist; so likewise, in an intellectual point of view, he manifests himself ingenious and adroit, rather than noble or comprehensive; fights for truth or victory, not by patient meditation, but by light sarcasm, whereby victory may indeed, for a time, be gained; but little Truth, what can be named Truth, especially in such matters as this, is to be looked for.

No one, we suppose, ever arrogated for Voltaire any praise of originality in this discussion; we suppose there is not a single idea, of any moment, relating to the Christian Religion, in all his multifarious writings, that had not been set forth again and again before his enterprises commenced. The labors of a very mixed multitude, from Porphyry down to Shaftesbury, including Hobbeses, Tindals, Tolands, some of them sceptics of a much nobler class, had left little room for merit in this kind; nay, Bayle, his own countryman, had just finished a life spent in preaching scepticism precisely similar, and by methods precisely similar, when Voltaire appeared on the arena. Indeed, scepticism, as we have before observed, was at this period universal among the higher ranks in France, with whom Voltaire chiefly associated. It is only in the merit and demerit of grinding down this grain into food for the people, and inducing so many to eat of it, that Voltaire can claim any singularity. However, we quarrel not with him on this head: there may be cases where the want of originality is even a moral merit. But it is a much more serious ground of offence that he intermeddled in Religion, without being himself, in any measure, religious; that he entered the Temple and continued there, with a levity, which, in any Temple where men worship, can beseem no brother man; that, in a word, he ardently, and with long-continued effort, warred against Christianity, without understanding beyond the mere superficies what Christianity was.

His polemical procedure in this matter, it appears to us, must now be admitted to have been, on the whole, a shallow one. Through all its manifold forms, and involutions, and repetitions, it turns, we believe exclusively, on one point: what Theologians have called the "plenary Inspiration of the Scriptures." This is the single wall, against which, through long years, and with innumerable battering-rams and catapults and pop-guns, he unweariedly batters. Concede him this, and his ram swings freely to and fro through space: there is nothing farther it can even aim at. That the Sacred Books could be aught else than a Bank-of-Faith Bill, for such and such quantities of Enjoyment, payable at sight in the other world, value received; which bill becomes waste paper, the stamp being questioned: — that the Christian Religion could have any deeper foundation than Books, could possibly be written in the purest nature of man, in mysterious, ineffaceable characters, to which Books, and all Revelations, and authentic traditions, were but a subsidiary matter, were but as the *light* whereby that divine *writing* was to be read; — nothing of this seems to have, even in the faintest manner, occurred to him. Yet herein, as we believe that the whole world has now begun to discover, lies the real essence of the question; by the negative or affirmative decision of which the Christian Religion, anything that is worth calling by that name, must fall, or endure forever. We believe also, that the wiser minds of our age have already come to agreement on this question; or rather never were divided regarding it. Christianity, the "Worship of Sorrow," has been recognized as divine, on far other grounds than "Essays on Miracles," and by considerations infinitely deeper than would avail in any mere "trial by jury." He who argues against it, or for it, in this manner, may be regarded as mistaking its nature: the Ithuriel, though to our eyes he wears a body and the fashion of armor, cannot be wounded with material steel. Our fathers were wiser than we, when they said in deepest earnestness, what we often hear in shallow mockery, that Religion is "not of Sense, but of Faith;" not of Understanding, but of Reason. He who finds himself without the latter, who by all his studying has failed to unfold it in himself, may have studied to great or to small purpose, we say not which; but of the Christian Religion, as of many other things, he has and can have no knowledge.

The Christian Doctrine we often hear likened to the Greek Philosophy, and found, on all hands, some measurable way superior to it: but this also seems a mistake. The Christian Doctrine, that Doctrine of Humility, in all senses godlike and the parent of all godlike virtues, is not superior, or inferior, or equal, to any doctrine of Socrates or Thales; being of a totally different nature; differing from these, as a perfect Ideal Poem does from a correct Computation in Arithmetic. He who compares it with such standards may lament that, beyond the mere letter, the purport of this divine Humility has never been disclosed to him; that the loftiest feeling hitherto vouchsafed to mankind is as yet hidden from his eyes.

For the rest, the question how Christianity originated is doubtless a high question; resolvable enough, if we view only its surface, which was all that Voltaire saw of it; involved in sacred, silent, unfathomable depths, if we investigate its interior meanings; which meanings, indeed, it may be, every new age will develop to itself in a new manner and with new degrees of light; for the whole truth may be called infinite, and to man's eye discernible only in parts; but the question itself is nowise the ultimate one in this matter.

We understand ourselves to be risking no new assertion, but simply reporting what is already the conviction of the greatest of our age, when we say, — that cheerfully recognizing, gratefully appropriating whatever Voltaire has proved, or any other man has proved, or shall prove, the Christian Religion, once here, cannot again pass away; that in one or the other form, it will endure through all time; that as in Scripture, so also in the heart of man, is written, "the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it." Were the memory of this Faith never so obscured, as, indeed, in all times, the coarse passions and perceptions of the world do all but obliterate it in the hearts of most; yet in every pure soul, in every Poet and Wise Man, it finds a new Missionary, a new Martyr, till the great volume of Universal History is finally closed, and man's destinies are fulfilled in this earth. "It is a height to which the human species were fated and enabled to attain; and from which, having once attained it, they can never retrograde."

These things, which it were far out of our place to attempt adequately elucidating here, must not be left out of sight in appreciating Voltaire's polemical worth. We find no trace of these, or of any the like essential considerations having been present with him, in examining the Christian Religion; nor indeed was it consistent with his general habits that they should be so. Totally destitute of religious Reverence, even of common practical seriousness; by nature or habit, undevout both in heart and head; not only without any Belief, in other than a material sense, but without the possibility of acquiring any, he can be no safe or permanently useful guide in this investigation. We may consider him as having opened the way to future inquirers of a truer spirit; but for his own part, as having engaged in an enterprise, the real nature of which was well-nigh unknown to him; and engaged in it with the issue to be anticipated in such a case; producing chiefly confusion, dislocation, destruction, on all hands; so that the good he achieved is still, in these times, found mixed with an alarming proportion of evil, from which, indeed, men rationally doubt whether much of it will in any time be separable.

We should err widely too, if, in estimating what quantity, altogether overlooking what quality, of intellect Voltaire may have manifested on this occasion, we took the result produced as any measure of the force applied. His task was not one of Affirmation, but of Denial; not a task of erecting and rearing up, which is slow and laborious; but of destroying and overturning, which in most cases is rapid and far easier. The force necessary for him was nowise a great and noble one; but a small, in some respects a mean one; to be nimbly and seasonably put in use. The Ephesian Temple, which it had employed many wise heads and strong arms for a lifetime to build, could be *un*built by one madman, in a single hour.

Of such errors, deficiencies and positive misdeeds, it appears to us a just criticism must accuse Voltaire: at the same time, we can nowise join in the condemnatory clamor which so many worthy persons, not without the best intentions, to this day keep up against him. His whole character seems to be plain enough, common enough, had not extraneous influences so perverted our views regarding it: nor, morally speaking, is it a worse character, but considerably a better one, than belongs to the mass of men. Voltaire's aims in opposing the Christian Religion were unhappily of a mixed nature; yet, after all, very nearly such aims as we have often seen directed against it, and often seen directed in its favor: a little love of finding Truth, with a great love of making Proselytes; which last is in itself a natural, universal feeling; and if honest, is, even in the worst cases, a subject for pity, rather than for hatred. As a light, careless, courteous Man of the World, he offers no hateful aspect; on the contrary, a kindly, gay, rather amiable one: hundreds of men, with half his worth of disposition, die daily, and their little world laments them. It is time that he too should be judged of by his intrinsic, not by his accidental qualities; that justice should be done to him also; for injustice can profit no man and no cause.

In fact, Voltaire's chief merits belong to Nature and himself; his chief faults are of his time and country. In that famous era of the Pompadours and *Encyclopédies*, he forms the main figure; and was such, we have seen, more by resembling the multitude, than by differing from them. It was a strange age, that of Louis XV.; in several points, a novel one in the history of mankind. In regard to its luxury and depravity, to the high culture of all merely practical and material faculties, and the entire torpor of all the purely contemplative and spiritual, this era considerably resembles that of the Roman Emperors. There too was external splendor and internal squalor; the highest completeness in all sensual arts, including among these not cookery and its adjuncts alone, but even "effect-painting" and "effect-writing;" only the art of virtuous living was a lost one. Instead of Love for Poetry, there was "Taste" for it; refinement in manners, with utmost coarseness in morals: in a word, the strange spectacle of a Social System, embracing large, cultivated portions of the human species, and founded only on Atheism. With the Romans, things went what we should call their natural course: Liberty, public spirit quietly declined into *caput-mortuum;* Self-love, Materialism, Baseness even to the disbelief in all possibility of Virtue, stalked more and more imperiously abroad; till the body-politic, long since deprived of its vital circulating fluids, had now become a putrid carcass, and fell in pieces to be the prey of ravenous wolves. Then was there, under these Attilas and Alarics, a world-spectacle of destruction and despair, compared with which the often-commemorated "horrors of the French Revolution," and all Napoleon's wars, were but the gay jousting of a tournament to the sack of stormed cities. Our European community has escaped the like dire consummation; and by causes which, as may be hoped, will always secure it from such. Nay, were there no other cause, it may be asserted, that in a commonwealth where the Christian Religion exists, where it once has existed, public and private Virtue, the basis of all Strength, never can become extinct; but in every new age, and even from the deepest decline, there is a chance, and in the course of ages a certainty of renovation.

That the Christian Religion, or any Religion, continued to exist; that some martyr heroism still lived in the heart of Europe to rise against mailed Tyranny when it rode triumphant, — was indeed no merit in the age of Louis XV., but a happy accident which it could not altogether get rid of. For that age too is to be regarded as an experiment, on the great scale, to decide the question, not yet, it would appear, settled to universal satisfaction: With what degree of vigor a political system, grounded on pure Self-interest, never so enlightened, but without a God or any recognition of the godlike in man, can be expected to flourish; or whether, in such circumstances, a political system can be expected to flourish, or even to subsist at all? It is contended by many that our mere love of personal Pleasure, or Happiness as it is called, acting on every individual, with such clearness as he may easily have, will of itself lead him to respect the rights of others, and wisely employ his own; to fulfil, on a mere principle of economy, all the duties of a good patriot; so that, in what respects the State, or the mere social existence of mankind, Belief, beyond the testimony of the senses, and Virtue, beyond the very common Virtue of loving what is pleasant and hating what is painful, are to be considered as supererogatory qualifications, as ornamental, not essential. Many there are, on the other hand, who pause over this doctrine; cannot discover, in such a universe of conflicting atoms, any principle by which the whole shall cohere; for if every man's selfishness, infinitely expansive, is to be hemmed in only by the infinitely expansive selfishness of every other man, it seems as if we should have a world of mutually repulsive bodies with no centripetal force to bind them together; in which case, it is well known, they would, by and by, diffuse themselves over space, and constitute a remarkable Chaos, but no habitable Solar or Stellar System.

If the age of Louis XV. was not made an *experimentum crucis* in regard to this question, one reason may be, that such experiments are too expensive. Nature cannot afford, above once or twice in the thousand years, to destroy a whole world for purposes of science; but must content herself with destroying one or two kingdoms. The age of Louis XV., so far as it went, seems a highly illustrative experiment. We are to remark also, that its operation was clogged by a very considerable disturbing force; by a large remnant, namely, of the old faith in Religion, in the invisible, celestial nature of Virtue, which our French Purifiers, by their utmost efforts of lavation, had not been able to wash away. The men did their best, but no man can do more. Their worst enemy, we imagine, will not accuse them of any undue regard to things unseen and spiritual: far from practising this invisible sort of Virtue, they cannot even believe in its possibility. The high exploits and endurances of old ages were no longer virtues, but "passions;" these antique persons had a taste for being heroes, a certain fancy to die for the truth: the more fools they! With our *Philosophes*, the only virtue of any civilization was what they call "Honor," the sanctioning deity of which is that wonderful "Force of Public Opinion." Concerning which virtue of Honor, we must be permitted to say, that she reveals herself too clearly as the daughter and heiress of our old acquaintance Vanity, who indeed has been known enough ever since the foundation of the world, at least since the date of that "Lucifer, son of the Morning;" but known chiefly in her proper character of strolling actress, or cast-clothes Abigail; and never, till that new era, had seen her issue set up as Queen and all-sufficient Dictatress of man's whole soul, prescribing with nicest precision what, in all practical and all moral emergencies, he was to do and to forbear. Again, with regard to this same Force of Public Opinion, it is a force well known to all of us; respected, valued as of indispensable utility, but nowise recognized as a final or divine force. We might ask, What divine, what truly great thing had ever been effected by this force? Was it the Force of Public Opinion that drove Columbus to America; John Kepler, not to fare sumptuously among Rodolph's Astrologers and Fire-eaters, but to perish of want, discovering the true System of the Stars? Still more ineffectual do we find it as a basis of public or private Morals. Nay, taken by itself, it may be called a baseless basis: for without some ulterior sanction, common to all minds; without some belief in the necessary, eternal, or which is the same, in the supramundane, divine nature of Virtue, existing in each individual, what could the moral judgment of a thousand or a thousand-thousand individuals avail us? Without some celestial guidance, whencesoever derived, or howsoever named, it appears to us the Force of Public Opinion would, by and by, become an extremely unprofitable one. "Enlighten Self-interest!" cries the *Philosophe*; "do but sufficiently enlighten it!" We ourselves have seen enlightened Self-interests, ere now; and truly, for most part, their light was only as that of a horn-lantern, sufficient to guide the bearer himself out of various puddles; but to us and the world of comparatively small advantage. And figure the human species, like an endless host, seeking its way onwards through undiscovered Time, in black darkness, save that each had his horn-lantern, and the vanguard some few of glass!

However, we will not dwell on controversial niceties. What we had to remark was, that this era, called of Philosophy, was in itself but a poor era; that any little morality it had was chiefly borrowed, and from those very ages which it accounted so barbarous. For this "Honor," this "Force of Public Opinion," is not asserted, on any side, to have much renovating, but only a sustaining or preventive power; it cannot create new Virtue, but at best may preserve what is already there. Nay, of the age of Louis XV. we may say that its very Power, its material strength, its knowledge, all that it had, was borrowed. It boasted itself to be an age of illumination; and truly illumination there was, of its kind: only, except the illuminated windows, almost nothing to be *seen* thereby. None of those great Doctrines or Institutions that have "made man in all points a man;" none even of those Discoveries that have the most subjected external Nature to his purposes, were made in that age. What Plough or Printing-press, what Chivalry or Christianity, nay what Steam-engine, or Quakerism, or Trial by Jury, did these Encyclopedists invent for mankind? They invented simply nothing: not one of man's virtues, not one of man's powers, is due to them; in all these respects the age of Louis XV. is among the most barren of recorded ages. Indeed, the whole trade of our *Philosophes* was directly the opposite of invention: it was not to produce, that they stood there; but to criticise, to quarrel with, to rend in pieces, what had been already produced; — a quite inferior trade: sometimes a useful, but on the whole a mean trade; often the fruit, and always the parent, of meanness, in every mind that permanently follows it.

Considering the then position of affairs, it is not singular that the age of Louis XV. should have been what it was: an age without nobleness, without high virtue or high manifestations of talent; an age of shallow clearness, of polish, self-conceit, scepticism and all forms of *Persiflage.* As little does it seem surprising, or peculiarly blamable, that Voltaire, the leading man of that age, should have partaken largely of all its qualities. True, his giddy activity took serious effect; the light firebrands, which he so carelessly scattered abroad, kindled fearful conflagrations; but in these there has been good as well as evil; nor is it just that, even for the latter, he, a limited mortal, should be charged with more than mortal's responsibility. After all, that parched, blighted period, and the period of earthquakes and tornadoes which followed it, have now well-nigh cleared away: they belong to the Past, and for us, and those that come after us, are not without their benefits, and calm historical meaning.

"The thinking heads of all nations," says a deep observer, "had in secret come to majority; and in a mistaken feeling of their vocation, rose the more fiercely against antiquated constraint. The Man of Letters is, by instinct, opposed to a Priesthood of old standing: the literary class and the clerical must wage a war of extermination, when they are divided; for both strive after one place. Such division became more and more perceptible, the nearer we approached the period of European manhood, the epoch of triumphant Learning; and Knowledge and Faith came into more decided contradiction. In the prevailing Faith, as was thought, lay the reason of the universal degradation; and by a more and more searching Knowledge men hoped to remove it. On all hands, the Religious feeling suffered, under manifold attacks against its actual manner of existence, against the forms in which hitherto it had embodied itself. The result of that modern way of thought was named Philosophy; and in this all was included that opposed itself to the ancient way of thought, especially, therefore, all that opposed itself to Religion. The original personal hatred against the Catholic Faith passed, by degrees, into hatred against the Bible, against the Christian Religion, and at last against Religion altogether. Nay more, this hatred of Religion naturally extended itself over all objects of enthusiasm in general; proscribed Fancy and Feeling, Morality and love of Art, the Future and the Antique; placed man, with an effort, foremost in the series of natural productions; and changed the infinite, creative music of the Universe into the monotonous clatter of a boundless Mill, which, turned by the stream of Chance, and swimming thereon, was a Mill of itself, without Architect and Miller, properly a genuine *perpetuum mobile*, a real self-grinding Mill.

"One enthusiasm was generously left to poor mankind, and rendered indispensable as a touchstone of the highest culture, for all jobbers in the same: Enthusiasm for this magnanimous Philosophy, and above all, for these its priests and mystagogues. France was so happy as to be the birthplace and dwelling of this new Faith, which had thus, from patches of pure knowledge, been pasted together. Low as Poetry ranked in this new Church, there were some poets among them, who, for effect's sake, made use of the old ornaments and old lights; but in so doing, ran a risk of kindling the new world-system by ancient fire. More cunning brethren, however, were at hand to help; and always in season poured cold water on the warming audience. The members of this Church were restlessly employed in clearing Nature, the Earth, the Souls of men, the Sciences, from all Poetry; obliterating every vestige of the Holy; disturbing, by sarcasms, the memory of all lofty occurrences and lofty men; disrobing the world of all its variegated vesture. . . . Pity that Nature continued so wondrous and incomprehensible, so poetical and infinite, all efforts to modernize her notwithstanding! However, if anywhere an old superstition, of a higher world and the like, came to light, instantly, on all hands, was a springing of rattles; that, if possible, the dangerous spark might be extinguished, by appliances of philosophy and wit: yet Tolerance was the watchword of the cultivated; and in France, above all, synonymous with Philosophy. Highly remarkable is this history of modern Unbelief; the key to all the vast phenomena of recent times. Not till last century, till the latter half of it, does the novelty begin; and in a little while it expands to an immeasurable bulk and variety: a second Reformation, a more comprehensive, and more specific, was unavoidable; and naturally it first visited that land which was the most modernized, and had the longest lain in an asthenic state, from want of freedom. . . .

"At the present epoch, however, we stand high enough to look back with a friendly smile on those bygone days; and even in those marvellous follies to discern curious crystallizations of historical matter. Thankfully will we stretch out our hands to those Men of Letters and *Philosophes:* for this delusion too required to be exhausted, and the scientific side of things to have full value given it. More beauteous and many-colored stands Poesy, like a leafy India, when contrasted with the cold, dead Spitzbergen of that Closet-Logic. That in the middle of the globe, an India, so warm and lordly, might exist, must also a cold motionless sea, dead cliffs, mist instead of the starry sky, and a long night, make both Poles uninhabitable. The deep meaning of the laws of Mechanism lay heavy on those anchorites in the deserts of Understanding: the charm of the first glimpse into it overpowered them: the Old avenged itself on them; to the first feeling of self-consciousness, they sacrificed, with wondrous devotedness, what was holiest and fairest in the world; and were the first that, in practice, again recognized and preached forth the sacredness of Nature, the infinitude of Art, the independence of Knowledge, the worth of the Practical, and the all-presence of the Spirit of History; and so doing, put an end to a Spectre-dynasty, more potent, universal and terrific than perhaps they themselves were aware of."[1]

How far our readers will accompany Novalis in such high-soaring speculation, is not for us to say. Meanwhile, that the better part of them have already, in their own dialect, united with him, and with us, in candid tolerance, in clear acknowledgment, towards French Philosophy, towards this Voltaire and the spiritual period which bears his name, we do not hesitate to believe. Intolerance, animosity can forward no cause;

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[1] *Novalis Schriften*, i. s. 198.

and least of all beseems the cause of moral and religious truth. A wise man has well reminded us, that "in any controversy, the instant we feel angry, we have already ceased striving for Truth, and begun striving for Ourselves." Let no man doubt but Voltaire and his disciples, like all men and all things that live and act in God's world, will one day be found to have "worked together for good." Nay that, with all his evil, he has already accomplished good, must be admitted in the soberest calculation. How much do we include in this little word: He gave the death-stab to modern Superstition! *That* horrid incubus, which dwelt in darkness, shunning the light, is passing away; with all its racks, and poison-chalices, and foul sleeping-draughts, is passing away without return. It was a most weighty service. Does not the cry of "No Popery," and some vague terror or sham-terror of "Smithfield fires," still act on certain minds in these very days? He who sees even a little way into the signs of the times, sees well that both the Smithfield fires, and the Edinburgh thumb-screws (for these too must be held in remembrance) are things which have long, very long, lain behind us; divided from us by a wall of Centuries, transparent indeed, but more impassable than adamant. For, as we said, Superstition is in its death-lair: the last agonies may endure for decades, or for centuries; but it carries the iron in its heart, and will not vex the earth any more.

That, with Superstition, Religion is also passing away, seems to us a still more ungrounded fear. Religion cannot pass away. The burning of a little straw may hide the stars of the sky; but the stars are there, and will reappear. On the whole, we must repeat the often-repeated saying, that it is unworthy a religious man to view an irreligious one either with alarm or aversion; or with any other feeling than regret, and hope, and brotherly commiseration. If he seek Truth, is he not our brother, and to be pitied? If he do not seek Truth, is he not still our brother, and to be pitied still more? Old Ludovicus Vives has a story of a clown that killed his ass because it had drunk up the moon, and he thought the world could ill spare that luminary. So he killed his ass, *ut lunam* *redderet.* The clown was well-intentioned, but unwise. Let us not imitate him: let us not slay a faithful servant, who has carried us far. He has not drunk the moon; but only the *reflection* of the moon, in his own poor water-pail, where too, it may be, he was drinking with purposes the most harmless.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES.[1]

[1829.]

It is no very good symptom either of nations or individuals, that they deal much in vaticination. Happy men are full of the present, for its bounty suffices them; and wise men also, for its duties engage them. Our grand business undoubtedly is, not to *see* what lies dimly at a distance, but to *do* what lies clearly at hand.

> "Know'st thou *Yesterday*, its aim and reason;
> Work'st thou well *To-day*, for worthy things?
> Calmly wait the *Morrow's* hidden season,
> Need'st not fear what hap soe'er it brings."

But man's "large discourse of reason" *will* look "before and after;" and, impatient of the "ignorant present time," will indulge in anticipation far more than profits him. Seldom can the unhappy be persuaded that the evil of the day is sufficient for it; and the ambitious will not be content with present splendor, but paints yet more glorious triumphs, on the cloud-curtain of the future.

The case, however, is still worse with nations. For here the prophets are not one, but many; and each incites and confirms the other; so that the fatidical fury spreads wider and wider, till at last even Saul must join in it. For there is still a real magic in the action and reaction of minds on one another. The casual deliration of a few becomes, by this mysterious reverberation, the frenzy of many; men lose the use, not only of their understandings, but of their bodily senses; while the most obdurate unbelieving hearts melt, like the rest, in the furnace where all are cast as victims and as fuel. It is grievous to think, that this noble omnipotence of Sympathy has been so rarely the Aaron's-rod of Truth and Virtue, and so often the Enchanter's-rod of Wickedness and Folly! No solitary miscreant, scarcely any solitary maniac, would venture on such actions and imaginations, as large communities of sane men have, in such circumstances, entertained as sound wisdom. Witness long scenes of the French Revolution, in these late times! Levity is no protection against such visitations, nor the utmost earnestness of character. The New-England Puritan burns witches, wrestles for months with the horrors of Satan's invisible world, and all ghastly phantasms, the daily and hourly precursors of the Last Day; then suddenly bethinks him that he is frantic, weeps bitterly, prays contritely, and the history of that gloomy season lies behind him like a frightful dream.

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[1] Edinburgh Review, No. 98.

Old England too has had her share of such frenzies and panics; though happily, like other old maladies, they have grown milder of late: and since the days of Titus Oates have mostly passed without loss of men's lives; or indeed without much other loss than that of reason, for the time, in the sufferers. In this mitigated form, however, the distemper is of pretty regular recurrence; and may be reckoned on at intervals, like other natural visitations; so that reasonable men deal with it, as the Londoners do with their fogs, — go cautiously out into the groping crowd, and patiently carry lanterns at noon; knowing, by a well-grounded faith, that the sun is still in existence, and will one day reappear. How often have we heard, for the last fifty years, that the country was wrecked, and fast sinking; whereas, up to this date, the country is entire and afloat! The "State in Danger" is a condition of things, which we have witnessed a hundred times; and as for the Church, it has seldom been out of "danger" since we can remember it.

All men are aware that the present is a crisis of this sort; why it has become so. The repeal of the Test Acts, and of the Catholic disabilities, has struck many of their ers with an indescribable astonishment. Those things d fixed and immovable; deep as the foundations of the world; and lo, in a moment they have vanished, and their place knows them no more! Our worthy friends mistook the slumbering Leviathan for an island; often as they had been assured, that Intolerance was, and could be nothing but a Monster; and so, mooring under the lee, they had anchored comfortably in his scaly rind, thinking to take good cheer; as for some space they did. But now their Leviathan has suddenly dived under; and they can no longer be fastened in the stream of time; but must drift forward on it, even like the rest of the world: no very appalling fate, we think, could they but understand it; which, however, they will not yet, for a season. Their little island is gone; sunk deep amid confused eddies; and what is left worth caring for in the universe? What is it to them that the great continents of the earth are still standing; and the polestar and all our loadstars, in the heavens, still shining and eternal? Their cherished little haven is gone, and they will not be comforted! And therefore, day after day, in all manner of periodical or perennial publications, the most lugubrious predictions are sent forth. The King has virtually abdicated; the Church is a widow, without jointure; public principle is gone; private honesty is going; society, in short, is fast falling in pieces; and a time of unmixed evil is come on us.

At such a period, it was to be expected that the rage of prophecy should be more than usually excited. Accordingly, the Millennarians have come forth on the right hand, and the Millites on the left. The Fifth-monarchy men prophesy from the Bible, and the Utilitarians from Bentham. The one announces that the last of the seals is to be opened, positively, in the year 1860; and the other assures us that "the greatest-happiness principle" is to make a heaven of earth, in a still shorter time. We know these symptoms too well, to think it necessary or safe to interfere with them. Time and the hours will bring relief to all parties. The grand encourager of Delphic or other noises is — the Echo. Left to themselves, th will the sooner dissipate, and die away in space.

Meanwhile, we too admit that the present is an importa time; as all present time necessarily is. The poorest Day th passes over us is the conflux of two Eternities; it is made up of currents that issue from the remotest Past, and flow onwards into the remotest Future. We were wise indeed, could we discern truly the signs of our own time; and by knowledge of its wants and advantages, wisely adjust our own position in it. Let us, instead of gazing idly into the obscure distance, look calmly around us, for a little, on the perplexed scene where we stand. Perhaps, on a more serious inspection, something of its perplexity will disappear, some of its distinctive characters and deeper tendencies more clearly reveal themselves; whereby our own relations to it, our own true aims and endeavors in it, may also become clearer.

Were we required to characterize this age of ours by any single epithet, we should be tempted to call it, not an Heroical, Devotional, Philosophical, or Moral Age, but, above all others, the Mechanical Age. It is the Age of Machinery, in every outward and inward sense of that word; the age which, with its whole undivided might, forwards, teaches and practises the great art of adapting means to ends. Nothing is now done directly, or by hand; all is by rule and calculated contrivance. For the simplest operation, some helps and accompaniments, some cunning abbreviating process is in readiness. Our old modes of exertion are all discredited, and thrown aside. On every hand, the living artisan is driven from his workshop, to make room for a speedier, inanimate one. The shuttle drops from the fingers of the weaver, and falls into iron fingers that ply it faster. The sailor furls his sail, and lays down his oar; and bids a strong, unwearied servant, on vaporous wings, bear him through the waters. Men have crossed oceans by steam; the Birmingham Fire-king has visited the fabulous East; and the genius of the Cape, were there any Camoens now to sing it, has again been alarmed, and with far stranger thunders than Gama's. There is no end to machinery. Even the horse is stripped of his harness, and finds a fleet fire-horse yoked in his stead. Nay, we have an artist that hatches chickens by steam; the very brood-hen is to be superseded! For all earthly, and for some unearthly purposes, we have machines and mechanic furtherances; for mincing our cabbages; for casting us into magnetic sleep. We remove mountains, and make seas our smooth highway; nothing can resist us. We war with rude Nature; and, by our resistless engines, come off always victorious, and loaded with spoils.

What wonderful accessions have thus been made, and are still making, to the physical power of mankind; how much better fed, clothed, lodged and, in all outward respects, accommodated men now are, or might be, by a given quantity of labor, is a grateful reflection which forces itself on every one. What changes, too, this addition of power is introducing into the Social System; how wealth has more and more increased, and at the same time gathered itself more and more into masses, strangely altering the old relations, and increasing the distance between the rich and the poor, will be a question for Political Economists, and a much more complex and important one than any they have yet engaged with.

But leaving these matters for the present, let us observe how the mechanical genius of our time has diffused itself into quite other provinces. Not the external and physical alone is now managed by machinery, but the internal and spiritual also. Here too nothing follows its spontaneous course, nothing is left to be accomplished by old natural methods. Everything has its cunningly devised implements, its pre-established apparatus; it is not done by hand, but by machinery. Thus we have machines for Education: Lancastrian machines; Hamiltonian machines; monitors, maps and emblems. Instruction, that mysterious communing of Wisdom with Ignorance, is no longer an indefinable tentative process, requiring a study of individual aptitudes, and a perpetual variation of means and methods, to attain the same end; but a secure, universal, straightforward business, to be conducted in the gross, by proper mechanism, with such intellect as comes to hand. Then, we have Religious machines, of all imaginable varieties; the Bible-Society, professing a far higher and heavenly structure, is found, on inquiry, to be altogether an earthly contrivance; supported by collection of moneys, by fomenting of vanities, by puffing, intrigue and chicane; a machine for converting the Heathen. It is the same in all other departments. Has any man, or any society of men, a truth to speak, a piece of spiritual work to do; they can nowise proceed at once and with the mere natural organs, but must first call a public meeting, appoint committees, issue prospectuses, eat a public dinner; in a word, construct or borrow machinery, wherewith to speak it and do it. Without machinery they were hopeless, helpless; a colony of Hindoo weavers squatting in the heart of Lancashire. Mark, too, how every machine must have its moving power, in some of the great currents of society; every little sect among us, Unitarians, Utilitarians, Anabaptists, Phrenologists, must have its Periodical, its monthly or quarterly Magazine; — hanging out, like its windmill, into the *popularis aura*, to grind meal for the society.

With individuals, in like manner, natural strength avails little. No individual now hopes to accomplish the poorest enterprise single-handed and without mechanical aids; he must make interest with some existing corporation, and till his field with their oxen. In these days, more emphatically than ever, "to live, signifies to unite with a party, or to make one." Philosophy, Science, Art, Literature, all depend on machinery. No Newton, by silent meditation, now discovers the system of the world from the falling of an apple; but some quite other than Newton stands in his Museum, his Scientific Institution, and behind whole batteries of retorts, digesters and galvanic piles imperatively "interrogates Nature," — who, however, shows no haste to answer. In defect of Raphaels, and Angelos, and Mozarts, we have Royal Academies of Painting, Sculpture, Music; whereby the languishing spirit of Art may be strengthened, as by the more generous diet of a Public Kitchen. Literature, too, has its Paternoster-row mechanism, its Trade-dinners, its Editorial conclaves, and huge subterranean, puffing bellows; so that books are not only printed, but, in a great measure, written and sold, by machinery.

National culture, spiritual benefit of all sorts, is under the same management. No Queen Christina, in these times, needs to send for her Descartes; no King Frederick for his Voltaire, and painfully nourish him with pensions and flattery: any sovereign of taste, who wishes to enlighten his people, has only to impose a new tax, and with the proceeds establish Philosophic Institutes. Hence the Royal and Imperial Societies, the Bibliothèques, Glyptothèques, Technothèques, which front us in all capital cities; like so many well-finished hives, to which it is expected the stray agencies of Wisdom will swarm of their own accord, and hive and make honey. In like manner, among ourselves, when it is thought that religion is declining, we have only to vote half-a-million's worth of bricks and mortar, and build new churches. In Ireland it seems they have gone still farther, having actually established a "Penny-a-week Purgatory-Society"! Thus does the Genius of Mechanism stand by to help us in all difficulties and emergencies, and with his iron back bears all our burdens.

These things, which we state lightly enough here, are yet of deep import, and indicate a mighty change in our whole manner of existence. For the same habit regulates not our modes of action alone, but our modes of thought and feeling. Men are grown mechanical in head and in heart, as well as in hand. They have lost faith in individual endeavor, and in natural force, of any kind. Not for internal perfection, but for external combinations and arrangements, for institutions, constitutions, — for Mechanism of one sort or other, do they hope and struggle. Their whole efforts, attachments, opinions, turn on mechanism, and are of a mechanical character.

We may trace this tendency in all the great manifestations of our time; in its intellectual aspect, the studies it most favors and its manner of conducting them; in its practical aspects, its politics, arts, religion, morals; in the whole sources, and throughout the whole currents, of its spiritual, no less than its material activity.

Consider, for example, the state of Science generally, in Europe, at this period. It is admitted, on all sides, that the Metaphysical and Moral Sciences are falling into decay, while the Physical are engrossing, every day, more respect and attention. In most of the European nations there is now no such thing as a Science of Mind; only more or less advancement in the general science, or the special sciences, of matter. The French were the first to desert Metaphysics; and though they have lately affected to revive their school, it has yet no signs of vitality. The land of Malebranche, Pascal, Descartes and Fénelon, has now only its Cousins and Villemains; while, in the department of Physics, it reckons far other names. Among ourselves, the Philosophy of Mind, after a rickety infancy, which never reached the vigor of manhood, fell suddenly into decay, languished and finally died out, with its last amiable cultivator, Professor Stewart. In no nation but Germany has any decisive effort been made in psychological science; not to speak of any decisive result. The science of the age, in short, is physical, chemical, physiological; in all shapes mechanical. Our favorite Mathematics, the highly prized exponent of all these other sciences, has also become more and more mechanical. Excellence in what is called its higher departments depends less on natural genius than on acquired expertness in wielding its machinery. Without undervaluing the wonderful results which a Lagrange or Laplace educes by means of it, we may remark, that their calculus, differential and integral, is little else than a more cunningly constructed arithmetical mill; where the factors being put in, are, as it were, ground into the true product, under cover, and without other effort on our part than steady turning of the handle. We have more Mathematics than ever; but less Mathesis. Archimedes and Plato could not have read the *Mécanique Céleste;* but neither would the whole French Institute see aught in that saying, "God geometrizes!" but a sentimental rhodomontade.

Nay, our whole Metaphysics itself, from Locke's time downwards, has been physical; not a spiritual philosophy, but a material one. The singular estimation in which his Essay was so long held as a scientific work (an estimation grounded, indeed, on the estimable character of the man) will one day be thought a curious indication of the spirit of these times. His whole doctrine is mechanical, in its aim and origin, in its method and its results. It is not a philosophy of the mind: it is a mere discussion concerning the origin of our consciousness, or ideas, or whatever else they are called; a genetic history of what we see *in* the mind. The grand secrets of Necessity and Free-will, of the Mind's vital or non-vital dependence on Matter, of our mysterious relations to Time and Space, to God, to the Universe, are not, in the faintest degree, touched on in these inquiries; and seem not to have the smallest connection with them.

The last class of our Scotch Metaphysicians had a dim notion that much of this was wrong; but they knew not how to right it. The school of Reid had also from the first taken a mechanical course, not seeing any other. The singular conclusions at which Hume, setting out from their admitted premises, was arriving, brought this school into being; they let loose Instinct, as an undiscriminating bandog, to guard them against these conclusions; — they tugged lustily at the logical chain by which Hume was so coldly towing them and the world into bottomless abysses of Atheism and Fatalism. But the chain somehow snapped between them; and the issue has been that nobody now cares about either, — any more than about Hartley's, Darwin's or Priestley's contemporaneous doings in England. Hartley's vibrations and vibratiuncles, one would think, were material and mechanical enough; but our Continental neighbors have gone still farther. One of their philosophers has lately discovered, that "as the liver secretes bile, so does the brain secrete thought;" which astonishing discovery Dr. Cabanis, more lately still, in his *Rapports du Physique et du Morale de l'Homme,* has pushed into its minutest developments.

The metaphysical philosophy of this last inquirer is certainly no shadowy or unsubstantial one. He fairly lays open our moral structure with his dissecting-knives and real metal probes; and exhibits it to the inspection of mankind, by Leuwenhoek microscopes, and inflation with the anatomical blowpipe. Thought, he is inclined to hold, is still secreted by the brain; but then Poetry and Religion (and it is really worth knowing) are "a product of the smaller intestines"! We have the greatest admiration for this learned doctor: with what scientific stoicism he walks through the land of wonders, unwondering; like a wise man through some huge, gaudy, imposing Vauxhall, whose fire-works, cascades and symphonies, the vulgar may enjoy and believe in, — but where he finds nothing real but the saltpetre, pasteboard and catgut. His book may be regarded as the ultimatum of mechanical metaphysics in our time; a remarkable realization of what in Martinus Scriblerus was still only an idea, that "as the jack had a meat-roasting quality, so had the body a thinking quality," — upon the strength of which the Nurembergers were to build a wood-and-leather man, "who should reason as well as most country parsons." Vaucanson did indeed make a wooden duck, that seemed to eat and digest; but that bold scheme of the Nurembergers remained for a more modern virtuoso.

This condition of the two great departments of knowledge, — the outward, cultivated exclusively on mechanical principles; the inward, finally abandoned, because, cultivated on such principles, it is found to yield no result, — sufficiently indicates the intellectual bias of our time, its all-pervading disposition towards that line of inquiry. In fact, an inward persuasion has long been diffusing itself, and now and then even comes to utterance, That, except the external, there are no true sciences; that to the inward world (if there be any) our only conceivable road is through the outward; that, in short, what cannot be investigated and understood mechanically, cannot be investigated and understood at all. We advert the more particularly to these intellectual propensities, as to prominent symptoms of our age, because Opinion is at all times doubly related to Action, first as cause, then as effect; and the speculative tendency of any age will therefore give us, on the whole, the best indications of its practical tendency.

Nowhere, for example, is the deep, almost exclusive faith we have in Mechanism more visible than in the Politics of this time. Civil government does by its nature include much that is mechanical, and must be treated accordingly. We term it indeed, in ordinary language, the Machine of Society, and talk of it as the grand working wheel from which all private machines must derive, or to which they must adapt, their movements. Considered merely as a metaphor, all this is well enough; but here, as in so many other cases, the "foam hardens itself into a shell," and the shadow we have wantonly evoked stands terrible before us and will not depart at our bidding. Government includes much also that is not mechanical, and cannot be treated mechanically; of which latter truth, as appears to us, the political speculations and exertions of our time are taking less and less cognizance.

Nay, in the very outset, we might note the mighty interest taken in *mere political arrangements*, as itself the sign of a mechanical age. The whole discontent of Europe takes this direction. The deep, strong cry of all civilized nations, — a cry which, every one now sees, must and will be answered, is: Give us a reform of Government! A good structure of legislation, a proper check upon the executive, a wise arrangement of the judiciary, is *all* that is wanting for human happiness. The Philosopher of this age is not a Socrates, a Plato, a Hooker, or Taylor, who inculcates on men the necessity and infinite worth of moral goodness, the great truth that our happiness depends on the mind which is within us, and not on the circumstances which are without us; but a Smith, a De Lolme, a Bentham, who chiefly inculcates the reverse of this, — that our happiness depends entirely on external circumstances; nay, that the strength and dignity of the mind within us is itself the creature and consequence of these. Were the laws, the government, in good order, all were well with us; the rest would care for itself! Dissentients from this opinion, expressed or implied, are now rarely to be met with; widely and angrily as men differ in its application, the principle is admitted by all.

Equally mechanical, and of equal simplicity, are the methods proposed by both parties for completing or securing this all-sufficient perfection of arrangement. It is no longer the moral, religious, spiritual condition of the people that is our concern, but their physical, practical, economical condition, as regulated by public laws. Thus is the Body-politic more than ever worshipped and tendered; but the Soul-politic less than ever. Love of country, in any high or generous sense, in any other than an almost animal sense, or mere habit, has little importance attached to it in such reforms, or in the opposition shown them. Men are to be guided only by their self-interests. Good government is a good balancing of these; and, except a keen eye and appetite for self-interest, requires no virtue in any quarter. To both parties it is emphatically a machine: to the discontented, a "taxing-machine;" to the contented, a "machine for securing property." Its duties and its faults are not those of a father, but of an active parish-constable.

Thus it is by the mere condition of the machine, by preserving it untouched, or else by reconstructing it, and oiling it anew, that man's salvation as a social being is to be insured and indefinitely promoted. Contrive the fabric of law aright, and without farther effort on your part, that divine spirit of Freedom, which all hearts venerate and long for, will of herself come to inhabit it; and under her healing wings every noxious influence will wither, every good and salutary one more and more expand. Nay, so devoted are we to this principle, and at the same time so curiously mechanical, that a new trade, specially grounded on it, has arisen among us, under the name of "Codification," or code-making in the abstract; whereby any people, for a reasonable consideration, may be accommodated with a patent code;— more easily than curious individuals with patent breeches, for the people does *not* need to be measured first.

To us who live in the midst of all this, and see continually the faith, hope and practice of every one founded on Mechanism of one kind or other, it is apt to seem quite natural, and as if it could never have been otherwise. Nevertheless, if we recollect or reflect a little, we shall find both that it has been, and might again be otherwise. The domain of Mechanism — meaning thereby political, ecclesiastical or other outward establishments — was once considered as embracing, and we are persuaded can at any time embrace, but a limited portion of man's interests, and by no means the highest portion.

To speak a little pedantically, there is a science of *Dynamics* in man's fortunes and nature, as well as of *Mechanics*. There is a science which treats of, and practically addresses, the primary, unmodified forces and energies of man, the mysterious springs of Love, and Fear, and Wonder, of Enthusiasm, Poetry, Religion, all which have a truly vital and *infinite* character; as well as a science which practically addresses the finite, modified developments of these, when they take the shape of immediate "motives," as hope of reward, or as fear of punishment.

Now it is certain, that in former times the wise men, the enlightened lovers of their kind, who appeared generally as Moralists, Poets or Priests, did, without neglecting the Mechanical province, deal chiefly with the Dynamical; applying themselves chiefly to regulate, increase and purify the inward primary powers of man; and fancying that herein lay the main difficulty, and the best service they could undertake. But a wide difference is manifest in our age. For the wise men, who now appear as Political Philosophers, deal exclusively with the Mechanical province; and occupying themselves in counting up and estimating men's motives, strive by curious checking and balancing, and other adjustments of Profit and Loss, to guide them to their true advantage: while, unfortunately, those same "motives" are so innumerable, and so variable in every individual, that no really useful conclusion can ever be drawn from their enumeration. But though Mechanism, wisely contrived, has done much for man in a social and moral point of view, we cannot be persuaded that it has ever been the chief source of his worth or happiness. Consider the great elements of human enjoyment, the attainments and possessions that exalt man's life to its present height, and see what part of these he owes to institutions, to Mechanism of any kind; and what to the instinctive, unbounded force, which Nature herself lent him, and still continues to him. Shall we say, for example, that Science and Art are indebted principally to the founders of Schools and Universities? Did not Science originate rather, and gain advancement, in the obscure closets of the Roger Bacons, Keplers, Newtons; in the workshops of the Fausts and the Watts; wherever, and in what guise soever Nature, from the first times downwards, had sent a gifted spirit upon the earth? Again, were Homer and Shakspeare members of any beneficed guild, or made Poets by means of it? Were Painting and Sculpture created by forethought, brought into the world by institutions for that end? No; Science and Art have, from first to last, been the free gift of Nature; an unsolicited, unexpected gift; often even a fatal one. These things rose up, as it were, by spontaneous growth, in the free soil and sunshine of Nature. They were not planted or grafted, nor even greatly multiplied or improved by the culture or manuring of institutions. Generally speaking, they have derived only partial help from these; often enough have suffered damage. They made constitutions for themselves. They originated in the Dynamical nature of man, not in his Mechanical nature.

Or, to take an infinitely higher instance, that of the Christian Religion, which, under every theory of it, in the believing or unbelieving mind, must ever be regarded as the crowning glory, or rather the life and soul, of our whole modern culture: How did Christianity arise and spread abroad among men? Was it by institutions, and establishments and well-arranged systems of mechanism? Not so; on the contrary, in all past and existing institutions for those ends, its divine spirit has invariably been found to languish and decay. It arose in the mystic deeps of man's soul; and was spread abroad by the "preaching of the word," by simple, altogether natural and individual efforts; and flew, like hallowed fire, from heart to heart, till all were purified and illuminated by it; and its heavenly light shone, as it still shines, and (as sun or star) will ever shine, through the whole dark destinies of man. Here again was no Mechanism; man's highest attainment was accomplished Dynamically, not Mechanically.

Nay, we will venture to say, that no high attainment, not even any far-extending movement among men, was ever accomplished otherwise. Strange as it may seem, if we read History with any degree of thoughtfulness, we shall find that the checks and balances of Profit and Loss have never been the grand agents with men; that they have never been roused into deep, thorough, all-pervading efforts by any computable prospect of Profit and Loss, for any visible, finite object; but always for some invisible and infinite one. The Crusades took their rise in Religion; their visible object was, commercially speaking, worth nothing. It was the boundless Invisible world that was laid bare in the imaginations of those men; and in its burning light, the visible shrunk as a scroll. Not mechanical, nor produced by mechanical means, was this vast movement. No dining at Freemasons' Tavern, with the other long train of modern machinery; no cunning reconciliation of "vested interests," was required here: only the passionate voice of one man, the rapt soul looking through the eyes of one man; and rugged, steel-clad Europe trembled beneath his words, and followed him whither he listed. In later ages it was still the same. The Reformation had an invisible, mystic and ideal aim; the result was indeed to be embodied in external things; but its spirit, its worth, was internal, invisible, infinite. Our English Revolution too originated in Religion. Men did battle, in those old days, not for Purse-sake, but for Conscience-sake. Nay, in our own days it is no way different. The French Revolution itself had something higher in it than cheap bread and a Habeas-corpus act. Here too was an Idea; a Dynamic, not a Mechanic force. It was a struggle, though a blind and at last an insane one, for the infinite, divine nature of Right, of Freedom, of Country.

Thus does man, in every age, vindicate, consciously or unconsciously, his celestial birthright. Thus does Nature hold on her wondrous, unquestionable course; and all our systems and theories are but so many froth-eddies or sand-banks, which from time to time she casts up, and washes away. When we can drain the Ocean into mill-ponds, and bottle up the Force of Gravity, to be sold by retail, in gas-jars; then may we hope to comprehend the infinitudes of man's soul under formulas of Profit and Loss; and rule over this too, as over a patent engine, by checks, and valves, and balances.

Nay, even with regard to Government itself, can it be necessary to remind any one that Freedom, without which indeed all spiritual life is impossible, depends on infinitely more complex influences than either the extension or the curtailment of the "democratic interest"? Who is there that, "taking the high *priori* road," shall point out what these influences are; what deep, subtle, inextricably entangled influences they have been and may be? For man is not the creature and product of Mechanism; but, in a far truer sense, its creator and producer: it is the noble People that makes the noble Government; rather than conversely. On the whole, Institutions are much; but they are not all. The freest and highest spirits of the world have often been found under strange outward circumstances: Saint Paul and his brother Apostles were politically slaves; Epictetus was personally one. Again, forget the influences of Chivalry and Religion, and ask: What countries produced Columbus and Las Casas? Or, descending from virtue and heroism to mere energy and spiritual talent: Cortes, Pizarro, Alba, Ximenes? The Spaniards of the sixteenth century were indisputably the noblest nation of Europe; yet they had the Inquisition and Philip II. They have the same government at this day; and are the lowest nation. The Dutch too have retained their old constitution; but no Siege of Leyden, no William the Silent, not even an Egmont or De Witt any longer appears among them. With ourselves also, where much has changed, effect has nowise followed cause as it should have done: two centuries ago, the Commons Speaker addressed Queen Elizabeth on bended knees, happy that the virago's foot did not even smite him; yet the people were then governed, not by a Castlereagh, but by a Burghley; they had their Shakspeare and Philip Sidney, where we have our Sheridan Knowles and Beau Brummel.

These and the like facts are so familiar, the truths which they preach so obvious, and have in all past times been so universally believed and acted on, that we should almost feel ashamed for repeating them; were it not that, on every hand, the memory of them seems to have passed away, or at best died into a faint tradition, of no value as a practical principle. To judge by the loud clamor of our Constitution-builders, Statists, Economists, directors, creators, reformers of Public Societies; in a word, all manner of Mechanists, from the

Cartwright up to the Code-maker; and by the nearly total silence of all Preachers and Teachers who should give a voice to Poetry, Religion and Morality, we might fancy either that man's Dynamical nature was, to all spiritual intents, extinct, or else so perfected that nothing more was to be made of it by the old means; and henceforth only in his Mechanical contrivances did any hope exist for him.

To define the limits of these two departments of man's activity, which work into one another, and by means of one another, so intricately and inseparably, were by its nature an impossible attempt. Their relative importance, even to the wisest mind, will vary in different times, according to the special wants and dispositions of those times. Meanwhile, it seems clear enough that only in the right co-ordination of the two, and the vigorous forwarding of *both*, does our true line of action lie. Undue cultivation of the inward or Dynamical province leads to idle, visionary, impracticable courses, and, especially in rude eras, to Superstition and Fanaticism, with their long train of baleful and well-known evils. Undue cultivation of the outward, again, though less immediately prejudicial, and even for the time productive of many palpable benefits, must, in the long-run, by destroying Moral Force, which is the parent of all other Force, prove not less certainly, and perhaps still more hopelessly, pernicious. This, we take it, is the grand characteristic of our age. By our skill in Mechanism, it has come to pass, that in the management of external things we excel all other ages; while in whatever respects the pure moral nature, in true dignity of soul and character, we are perhaps inferior to most civilized ages.

In fact, if we look deeper, we shall find that this faith in Mechanism has now struck its roots down into man's most intimate, primary sources of conviction; and is thence sending up, over his whole life and activity, innumerable stems, — fruit-bearing and poison-bearing. The truth is, men have lost their belief in the Invisible, and believe, and hope, and work only in the Visible; or, to speak it in other words: This is not a Religious age. Only the material, the immediately practical, not the divine and spiritual, is important to us. The infinite, absolute character of Virtue has passed into a finite, conditional one; it is no longer a worship of the Beautiful and Good; but a calculation of the Profitable. Worship, indeed, in any sense, is not recognized among us, or is mechanically explained into Fear of pain, or Hope of pleasure. Our true Deity is Mechanism. It has subdued external Nature for us, and we think it will do all other things. We are Giants in physical power: in a deeper than metaphorical sense, we are Titans, that strive, by heaping mountain on mountain, to conquer Heaven also.

The strong Mechanical character, so visible in the spiritual pursuits and methods of this age, may be traced much farther into the condition and prevailing disposition of our spiritual nature itself. Consider, for example, the general fashion of Intellect in this era. Intellect, the power man has of knowing and believing, is now nearly synonymous with Logic, or the mere power of arranging and communicating. Its implement is not Meditation, but Argument. "Cause and effect" is almost the only category under which we look at, and work with, all Nature. Our first question with regard to any object is not, What is it? but, How is it? We are no longer instinctively driven to apprehend, and lay to heart, what is Good and Lovely, but rather to inquire, as on-lookers, how it is produced, whence it comes, whither it goes. Our favorite Philosophers have no love and no hatred; they stand among us not to do, nor to create anything, but as a sort of Logic-mills to grind out the true causes and effects of all that is done and created. To the eye of a Smith, a Hume or a Constant, all is well that works quietly. An Order of Ignatius Loyola, a Presbyterianism of John Knox, a Wickliffe or a Henry the Eighth, are simply so many mechanical phenomena, caused or causing.

The *Euphuist* of our day differs much from his pleasant predecessors. An intellectual dapperling of these times boasts chiefly of his irresistible perspicacity, his "dwelling in the daylight of truth," and so forth; which, on examination, turns out to be a dwelling in the *rush*-light of "closet-logic," and a deep unconsciousness that there is any other light to dwell in or any other objects to survey with it. Wonder, indeed, is, on all hands, dying out: it is the sign of uncultivation to wonder. Speak to any small man of a high, majestic Reformation, of a high, majestic Luther, and forthwith he sets about "accounting" for it; how the "circumstances of the time" called for such a character, and found him, we suppose, standing girt and road-ready, to do its errand; how the "circumstances of the time" created, fashioned, floated him quietly along into the result; how, in short, this small man, had he been there, could have performed the like himself! For it is the "force of circumstances" that does everything; the force of one man can do nothing. Now all this is grounded on little more than a metaphor. We figure Society as a "Machine," and that mind is opposed to mind, as body is to body; whereby two, or at most ten, little minds must be stronger than one great mind. Notable absurdity! For the plain truth, very plain, we think, is, that minds are opposed to minds in quite a different way; and *one* man that has a higher Wisdom, a hitherto unknown spiritual Truth in him, is stronger, not than ten men that have it not, or than ten thousand, but than *all* men that have it not; and stands among them with a quite ethereal, angelic power, as with a sword out of Heaven's own armory, sky-tempered, which no buckler, and no tower of brass, will finally withstand.

But to us, in these times, such considerations rarely occur. We enjoy, we see nothing by direct vision; but only by reflection, and in anatomical dismemberment. Like Sir Hudibras, for every Why we must have a Wherefore. We have our little *theory* on all human and divine things. Poetry, the workings of genius itself, which in all times, with one or another meaning, has been called Inspiration, and held to be mysterious and inscrutable, is no longer without its scientific exposition. The building of the lofty rhyme is like any other masonry or bricklaying: we have theories of its rise, height, decline and fall, — which latter, it would seem, is now near, among all people. Of our "Theories of Taste," as they are called, wherein the deep, infinite, unspeakable Love of Wisdom and Beauty, which dwells in all men, is "explained," made mechanically visible, from "Association" and the like, why should we say anything? Hume has written us a "Natural History of Religion;" in which one Natural History all the rest are included. Strangely too does the general feeling coincide with Hume's in this wonderful problem; for whether his "Natural History" be the right one or not, that Religion must have a Natural History, all of us, cleric and laic, seem to be agreed. He indeed regards it as a Disease, we again as Health; so far there is a difference; but in our first principle we are at one.

To what extent theological Unbelief, we mean intellectual dissent from the Church, in its view of Holy Writ, prevails at this day, would be a highly important, were it not, under any circumstances, an almost impossible inquiry. But the Unbelief, which is of a still more fundamental character, every man may see prevailing, with scarcely any but the faintest contradiction, all around him; even in the Pulpit itself. Religion in most countries, more or less in every country, is no longer what it was, and should be, — a thousand-voiced psalm from the heart of Man to his invisible Father, the fountain of all Goodness, Beauty, Truth, and revealed in every revelation of these; but for the most part, a wise prudential feeling grounded on mere calculation; a matter, as all others now are, of Expediency and Utility; whereby some smaller quantum of earthly enjoyment may be exchanged for a far larger quantum of celestial enjoyment. Thus Religion too is Profit, a working for wages; not Reverence, but vulgar Hope or Fear. Many, we know, very many we hope, are still religious in a far different sense; were it not so, our case were too desperate: but to witness that such is the temper of the times, we take any calm observant man, who agrees or disagrees in our feeling on the matter, and ask him whether our *view* of it is not in general well-founded.

Literature too, if we consider it, gives similar testimony. At no former era has Literature, the printed communication of Thought, been of such importance as it is now. We often hear that the Church is in danger; and truly so it is, — in a danger it seems not to know of: for, with its tithes in the most perfect safety, its functions are becoming more and more superseded. The true Church of England, at this moment, lies in the Editors of its Newspapers. These preach to the people daily, weekly; admonishing kings themselves; advising peace or war, with an authority which only the first Reformers, and a long past class of Popes, were possessed of; inflicting moral censure; imparting moral encouragement, consolation, edification; in all ways diligently "administering the Discipline of the Church." It may be said too, that in private disposition the new Preachers somewhat resemble the Mendicant Friars of old times: outwardly full of holy zeal; inwardly not without stratagem, and hunger for terrestrial things. But omitting this class, and the boundless host of watery personages who pipe, as they are able, on so many scrannel straws, let us look at the higher regions of Literature, where, if anywhere, the pure melodies of Poesy and Wisdom should be heard. Of natural talent there is no deficiency: one or two richly endowed individuals even give us a superiority in this respect. But what is the song they sing? Is it a tone of the Memnon Statue, breathing music as the *light* first touches it? A "liquid wisdom," disclosing to our sense the deep, infinite harmonies of Nature and man's soul? Alas, no! It is not a matin or vesper hymn to the Spirit of Beauty, but a fierce clashing of cymbals, and shouting of multitudes, as children pass through the fire to Moloch! Poetry itself has no eye for the Invisible. Beauty is no longer the god it worships, but some brute image of Strength; which we may well call an idol, for true Strength is one and the same with Beauty, and its worship also is a hymn. The meek, silent Light can mould, create and purify all Nature; but the loud Whirlwind, the sign and product of Disunion, of Weakness, passes on, and is forgotten. How widely this veneration for the physically Strongest has spread itself through Literature, any one may judge who reads either criticism or poem. We praise a work, not as "true," but as "strong;" our highest praise is that it has "affected" us, has "terrified" us. All this, it has been well observed, is the "maximum of the Barbarous," the symptom, not of vigorous refinement, but of luxurious corruption. It speaks much, too, for men's indestructible love of truth, that nothing of this kind will abide with them; that even the talent of a Byron cannot permanently seduce us into idol-worship; that he too, with all his wild siren charming, already begins to be disregarded and forgotten.

Again, with respect to our Moral condition: here also, he who runs may read that the same physical, mechanical influences are everywhere busy. For the "superior morality," of which we hear so much, we too would desire to be thankful: at the same time, it were but blindness to deny that this "superior morality" is properly rather an "inferior criminality," produced not by greater love of Virtue, but by greater perfection of Police; and of that far subtler and stronger Police, called Public Opinion. This last watches over us with its Argus eyes more keenly than ever; but the "inward eye" seems heavy with sleep. Of any belief in invisible, divine things, we find as few traces in our Morality as elsewhere. It is by tangible, material considerations that we are guided, not by inward and spiritual. Self-denial, the parent of all virtue, in any true sense of that word, has perhaps seldom been rarer: so rare is it, that the most, even in their abstract speculations, regard its existence as a chimera. Virtue is Pleasure, is Profit; no celestial, but an earthly thing. Virtuous men, Philanthropists, Martyrs are happy accidents; their "taste" lies the right way! In all senses, we worship and follow after Power; which may be called a physical pursuit. No man now loves Truth, as Truth must be loved, with an infinite love; but only with a finite love, and as it were *par amours*. Nay, properly speaking, he does not *believe* and know it, but only "*thinks*" it, and that "there is every probability"! He preaches it aloud, and rushes courageously forth with it, — if there is a multitude huzzaing at his back; yet ever keeps looking over his shoulder, and the instant the huzzaing languishes, he too stops short.

In fact, what morality we have takes the shape of Ambition, of "Honor:" beyond money and money's worth, our only rational blessedness is Popularity. It were but a fool's trick to die for conscience. Only for "character," by duel, or, in case of extremity, by suicide, is the wise man bound to die. By arguing on the "force of circumstances," we have argued away all force from ourselves; and stand leashed together, uniform in dress and movement, like the rowers of some boundless galley. This and that may be right and true; *but* we must not do it. Wonderful "Force of Public Opinion"! We must act and walk in all points as it prescribes; follow the traffic it bids us, realize the sum of money, the degree of "influence" it expects of us, *or* we shall be lightly esteemed; certain mouthfuls of articulate wind will be blown at us, and this what mortal courage can front? Thus, while civil liberty is more and more secured to us, our moral liberty is all but lost. Practically considered, our creed is Fatalism; and, free in hand and foot, we are shackled in heart and soul with far straiter than feudal chains. Truly may we say, with the Philosopher, "the deep meaning of the Laws of Mechanism lies heavy on us;" and in the closet, in the market-place, in the temple, by the social hearth, encumbers the whole movements of our mind, and over our noblest faculties is spreading a nightmare sleep.

These dark features, we are aware, belong more or less to other ages, as well as to ours. This faith in Mechanism, in the all-importance of physical things, is in every age the common refuge of Weakness and blind Discontent; of all who believe, as many will ever do, that man's true good lies without him, not within. We are aware also, that, as applied to ourselves in all their aggravation, they form but half a picture; that in the whole picture there are bright lights as well as gloomy shadows. If we here dwell chiefly on the latter, let us not be blamed: it is in general more profitable to reckon up our defects than to boast of our attainments.

Neither, with all these evils more or less clearly before us, have we at any time despaired of the fortunes of society. Despair, or even despondency, in that respect, appears to us, in all cases, a groundless feeling. We have a faith in the imperishable dignity of man; in the high vocation to which, throughout this his earthly history, he has been appointed. However it may be with individual nations, whatever melancholic speculators may assert, it seems a well-ascertained fact, that in all times, reckoning even from those of the Heraclides and Pelasgi, the happiness and greatness of mankind at large have been continually progressive. Doubtless this age also is advancing. Its very unrest, its ceaseless activity, its discontent contains matter of promise. Knowledge, education are opening the eyes of the humblest; are increasing the number of thinking minds without limit. This is as it should be; for not in turning back, not in resisting, but only in resolutely struggling forward, does our life consist.

Nay, after all, our spiritual maladies are but of Opinion; we are but fettered by chains of our own forging, and which ourselves also can rend asunder. This deep, paralyzed subjection to physical objects comes not from Nature, but from our own unwise mode of *viewing* Nature. Neither can we understand that man wants, at this hour, any faculty of heart, soul or body, that ever belonged to him. "He, who has been born, has been a First Man;" has had lying before his young eyes, and as yet unhardened into scientific shapes, a world as plastic, infinite, divine, as lay before the eyes of Adam himself. If Mechanism, like some glass bell, encircles and imprisons us; if the soul looks forth on a fair heavenly country which it cannot reach, and pines, and in its scanty atmosphere is ready to perish, — yet the bell is but of glass; "one bold stroke to break the bell in pieces, and thou art delivered!" Not the invisible world is wanting, for it dwells in man's soul, and this last is still here. Are the solemn temples, in which the Divinity was once visibly revealed among us, crumbling away? We can repair them, we can rebuild them. The wisdom, the heroic worth of our forefathers, which we have lost, we can recover. That admiration of old nobleness, which now so often shows itself as a faint *dilettantism*, will one day become a generous emulation, and man may again be all that he has been, and more than he has been. Nor are these the mere day-dreams of fancy; they are clear possibilities; nay, in this time they are even assuming the character of hopes. Indications we do see in other countries and in our own, signs infinitely cheering to us, that Mechanism is not always to be our hard taskmaster, but one day to be our pliant, all-ministering servant; that a new and brighter spiritual era is slowly evolving itself for all men. But on these things our present course forbids us to enter.

Meanwhile, that great outward changes are in progress can be doubtful to no one. The time is sick and out of joint. Many things have reached their height; and it is a wise adage that tells us, "the darkest hour is nearest the dawn." Wherever we can gather indication of the public thought, whether from printed books, as in France or Germany, or from Carbonari rebellions and other political tumults, as in Spain, Portugal, Italy and Greece, the voice it utters is the same. The thinking minds of all nations call for change. There is a deep-lying struggle in the whole fabric of society; a boundless grinding collision of the New with the Old. The French Revolution, as is now visible enough, was not the parent of this mighty movement, but its offspring. Those two hostile influences, which always exist in human things, and on the constant intercommunion of which depends their health and safety, had lain in separate masses, accumulating through generations, and France was the scene of their fiercest explosion; but the final issue was not unfolded in that country: nay it is not yet anywhere unfolded. Political freedom is hitherto the object of these efforts; but they will not and cannot stop there. It is towards a higher freedom than mere freedom from oppression by his fellow-mortal, that man dimly aims. Of this higher, heavenly freedom, which is "man's reasonable service," all his noble institutions, his faithful endeavors and loftiest attainments, are but the body, and more and more approximated emblem.

On the whole, as this wondrous planet, Earth, is journeying with its fellows through infinite Space, so are the wondrous destinies embarked on it journeying through infinite Time, under a higher guidance than ours. For the present, as our astronomy informs us, its path lies towards *Hercules*, the constellation of *Physical Power:* but that is not our most pressing concern. Go where it will, the deep HEAVEN will be around it. Therein let us have hope and sure faith. To reform a world, to reform a nation, no wise man will undertake; and all but foolish men know, that the only solid, though a far slower reformation, is what each begins and perfects on ***himself.***

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